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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' BULLETIN No. 1551

June 1930

MARKETING FARM  
PRODUCE *by*  
PARCEL POST



**P**RODUCER AND CONSUMER will find in this bulletin information as to possibilities of marketing farm products by parcel post. Parcel-post shipments of farm products have been slowly increasing in number since the establishment of parcel-post service, though they will always constitute but a small percentage of all farm products that go to market. Proper attention must be given to parcel-post requirements and containers, to methods of standardizing the products, to packing, and to the business phases involved. Dealing by parcel post succeeds if farmers pay proper attention to these things—always supposing that the consumer also observes good business methods from his end. Marketing by parcel post, within its limitations, is a useful means of marketing.

Although interest in parcel-post marketing is not as keen or articulate as it was when the subject was new, the demand for information on its possibilities continues. Produce sent direct to consumer will always constitute a comparatively small percentage of the total food supply because of the geographic distribution of production and the economy of carload transportation. Physically, the transportation by parcel post of nearly all kinds of farm products is a possibility, but economically it is not always justifiable. Marketing by parcel post or by any other means of transportation direct from producer to consumer is satisfactory only when the proper conditions exist.

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# MARKETING FARM PRODUCE BY PARCEL POST

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## POSTAL REGULATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

**E**ACH PERSON interested in marketing by parcel post can readily become acquainted with postal regulations and requirements by consulting the local postal authorities. Most containers for commercial shipments used in other methods of transportation are admissible to the mails, provided they are in good condition and the contents are in good shipping condition. Measurements of parcels in girth and length added may not exceed 84 inches, nor may the weight exceed 70 pounds for the first three zones nor 50 pounds for the other zones. A general provision of postal regulations is that:

Articles of a perishable nature must not be accepted by postmasters for mailing unless they are in such condition at the time of mailing as reasonably to assure their arrival at destination and delivery in good order and in containers that will prevent the escape of

any of the contents; this is obligatory in order to protect other mail matter and save loss to the owner.

All parcels containing perishable products like meat, butter, and cheese should be marked "Perishable," in letters large enough to be readily seen and may also be marked with the additional words "Keep from heat." All vegetables and fruits should be marked "Perishable," and eggs should be marked "Eggs" or "Eggs, fragile."

TABLE 1.—Parcel-post rates

[Parcel post must be fully prepaid—a fraction of a pound is computed as a full pound, and an additional charge of 2 cents on each parcel is made except upon those collected on rural-delivery routes. These rates, including the 2-cent additional charge, are shown in the following table and paragraph a]

Weight in pounds	Local <sup>1</sup>	Zones						
		First and second, up to 150 miles	Third, 150 to 300 miles	Fourth, 300 to 600 miles	Fifth, 600 to 1,000 miles	Sixth, 1,000 to 1,400 miles	Seventh, 1,400 to 1,800 miles	Eighth, over 1,800 miles
	Dollar	Dollar	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
1.....	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.12	0.13
2.....	.08	.08	.10	.12	.15	.18	.22	.25
3.....	.08	.09	.12	.16	.21	.26	.32	.37
4.....	.09	.10	.14	.20	.27	.34	.42	.49
5.....	.09	.11	.16	.24	.33	.42	.52	.61
6.....	.10	.12	.18	.28	.39	.50	.62	.73
7.....	.10	.13	.20	.32	.45	.58	.72	.85
8.....	.11	.14	.22	.36	.51	.66	.82	.97
9.....	.11	.15	.24	.40	.57	.74	.92	1.09
10.....	.12	.16	.26	.44	.63	.82	1.02	1.21
11.....	.12	.17	.28	.48	.69	.90	1.12	1.33
12.....	.13	.18	.30	.52	.75	.98	1.22	1.45
13.....	.13	.19	.32	.56	.81	1.06	1.32	1.57
14.....	.14	.20	.34	.60	.87	1.14	1.42	1.69
15.....	.14	.21	.36	.64	.93	1.22	1.52	1.81
16.....	.15	.22	.38	.68	.99	1.30	1.62	1.93
17.....	.15	.23	.40	.72	1.05	1.38	1.72	2.05
18.....	.16	.24	.42	.76	1.11	1.46	1.82	2.17
19.....	.16	.25	.44	.80	1.17	1.54	1.92	2.29
20.....	.17	.26	.46	.84	1.23	1.62	2.02	2.41
21.....	.17	.27	.48	.88	1.29	1.70	2.12	2.53
22.....	.18	.28	.50	.92	1.35	1.78	2.22	2.65
23.....	.18	.29	.52	.96	1.41	1.86	2.32	2.77
24.....	.19	.30	.54	1.00	1.47	1.94	2.42	2.89
25.....	.19	.31	.56	1.04	1.53	2.02	2.52	3.01
26.....	.20	.32	.58	1.08	1.59	2.10	2.62	3.13
27.....	.20	.33	.60	1.12	1.65	2.18	2.72	3.25
28.....	.21	.34	.62	1.16	1.71	2.26	2.82	3.37
29.....	.21	.35	.64	1.20	1.77	2.34	2.92	3.49
30.....	.22	.36	.66	1.24	1.83	2.42	3.02	3.61
31.....	.22	.37	.68	1.28	1.89	2.50	3.12	3.73
32.....	.23	.38	.70	1.32	1.95	2.58	3.22	3.85
33.....	.23	.39	.72	1.36	2.01	2.66	3.32	3.97
34.....	.24	.40	.74	1.40	2.07	2.74	3.42	4.09
35.....	.24	.41	.76	1.44	2.13	2.82	3.52	4.21
36.....	.25	.42	.78	1.48	2.19	2.90	3.62	4.33
37.....	.25	.43	.80	1.52	2.25	2.98	3.72	4.45
38.....	.26	.44	.82	1.56	2.31	3.06	3.82	4.57
39.....	.26	.45	.84	1.60	2.37	3.14	3.92	4.69
40.....	.27	.46	.86	1.64	2.43	3.22	4.02	4.81
41.....	.27	.47	.88	1.68	2.49	3.30	4.12	4.93
42.....	.28	.48	.90	1.72	2.55	3.38	4.22	5.05
43.....	.28	.49	.92	1.76	2.61	3.46	4.32	5.17
44.....	.29	.50	.94	1.80	2.67	3.54	4.42	5.29
45.....	.29	.51	.96	1.84	2.73	3.62	4.52	5.41
46.....	.30	.52	.98	1.88	2.79	3.70	4.62	5.53
47.....	.30	.53	1.00	1.92	2.85	3.78	4.72	5.65
48.....	.31	.54	1.02	1.96	2.91	3.86	4.82	5.77
49.....	.31	.55	1.04	2.00	2.97	3.94	4.92	5.89
50.....	.32	.56	1.06	2.04	3.03	4.02	5.02	6.01
51.....	.32	.57	1.08					
52.....	.33	.58	1.10					
53.....	.33	.59	1.12					
54.....	.34	.60	1.14					
55.....	.34	.61	1.16					
56.....	.35	.62	1.18					

<sup>1</sup> The local zone includes the mail service within the jurisdiction of the mailing office. More than 50 pounds can not be sent over 300 miles; that is, beyond the third zone. Rates on all articles are the same.

TABLE 1.—*Parcel-post rates*—Continued

Weight in pounds	Local	Zones						
		First and second, up to 150 miles	Third, 150 to 300 miles	Fourth, 300 to 600 miles	Fifth, 600 to 1,000 miles	Sixth, 1,000 to 1,400 miles	Seventh, 1,400 to 1,800 miles	Eighth, over 1,800 miles
	<i>Dollar</i>	<i>Dollar</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>
57.....	.35	.63	1.20	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
58.....	.36	.64	1.22	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
59.....	.36	.65	1.24	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
60.....	.37	.66	1.26	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
61.....	.37	.67	1.28	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
62.....	.38	.68	1.30	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
63.....	.38	.69	1.32	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
64.....	.39	.70	1.34	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
65.....	.39	.71	1.36	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
66.....	.40	.72	1.38	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
67.....	.40	.73	1.40	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
68.....	.41	.74	1.42	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
69.....	.41	.75	1.44	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
70.....	.42	.76	1.46	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

(a) Parcels subject to the pound rates, mailed for delivery within the first or second zone, are, when the distance by the shortest regular mail route from the office of origin to the office of delivery is 300 miles or more, chargeable with postage at the rate of 8 cents for the first pound and 2 cents for each additional pound, a fraction of a pound being computed as a full pound.

NOTE.—On parcels collected on rural-delivery routes the postage will be 2 cents less than shown in the foregoing table, provided they are indorsed "Mailed on rural route" to show that they are not subject to the additional charge.

#### SENDER'S RECEIPT FOR ORDINARY PARCEL

When desired a receipt is furnished the sender of an ordinary parcel by the mailing office upon payment of 1 cent. This fee does not insure the parcel against loss, and no receipt is obtained from the addressee on delivery. It merely serves as evidence of mailing.

#### ADDRESS AND SENDER'S "CARD"

Each parcel should be plainly and completely addressed on the parcel itself, as tags are liable to be torn off in handling. It is also required that the word "from" and the name and address of the sender be placed in the upper left-hand corner of the face of the parcel upon which the address appears; this is what is referred to as the sender's card.

#### INSURING PARCELS

A parcel may be insured up to \$5 value for 5 cents; up to \$25 for 8 cents; up to \$50 value for 10 cents; and up to \$100 value for 25 cents. The insurance fees are in addition to the postage and must be prepaid with stamps affixed to the parcel. A receipt for delivery of an insured parcel may be had on payment of a fee of 3 cents.

#### PARCELS COLLECT ON DELIVERY

The value of a parcel may be collected on delivery and returned to the sender. The fee for collection on delivery is 12 cents for value not to exceed \$10, 15 cents for collections not to exceed \$50, and 25 cents for collections not to exceed \$100.

## WRITTEN INCLOSURES IN PARCELS

No written communication may be inclosed in a parcel, as such inclosure would subject the parcel to first-class postage rates, but a statement as to the contents of the parcel and the prices of each item, with the total, may be inclosed. This must not include such statement for any other parcel sent at the same or another time.

## PURE FOOD LAWS

In shipping farm products to or through another State the Federal pure food laws must be observed. Full information on these are published in Office of Secretary Circulars 21 and 136, which may be had by addressing the United States Department of Agriculture.

## ECONOMICS OF PARCEL-POST MARKETING

Farmers can make extensive use of parcel-post marketing under certain conditions if they will. One of the chief factors in preventing the satisfactory development of parcel-post marketing has been the price asked by some farmers for produce. To illustrate: One farmer's wife was receiving 20 cents a pound for butter in her local market, a country store. When asked if she would be willing to ship it to a city by parcel post and at what price, she replied that she would do so at 50 cents a pound. On the other hand, would-be purchasers frequently have been known to offer producers a lower price than they can obtain in their local markets. It is needless to say that such imperfect and erroneous ideas as to equitable prices defeat the possibility of marketing produce satisfactorily by parcel post. Business in marketing by parcel post can be secured and held only by shipping produce of high quality and by charging reasonable prices.

It must be understood that there is nothing magical about marketing by parcel post. Every producer considering marketing by this medium should carefully compare the possible net returns by this method with the net returns by other methods and reach a conclusion as to which serves his purpose best. Since motor transportation has made it much easier for the farmer to reach markets and since the chain stores now handle many of the more perishable farm products, there is less attraction than formerly to both farmer and city or town consumer in marketing by parcel post.

Roadside marketing is direct marketing; many farmers may find this preferable to marketing by parcel post.

The larger the quantity, within the postal limits, that is shipped at any one time the more economical is the factor of postage and therefore the more attractive from the viewpoint of cost both to the producer and to the consumer. This applies both to shipments and to the return of empty containers. It would not be economical for a consumer to secure half a dozen different kinds of vegetables from as many different producers, but if a supply of half a dozen kinds of vegetables and fruits could be obtained in one parcel from one producer it might be both advantageous and attractive.

In the first and second parcel-post zones a 5-pound parcel would cost 9 cents postage, plus the service charge of 2 cents—11 cents in

all, or  $2\frac{1}{5}$  cents a pound. A 20-pound parcel would cost 26 cents postage and service charge (24 cents postage plus 2 cents service charge) or 1.3 cents a pound, while a 70-pound parcel would cost 76 cents in all or  $1\frac{3}{5}$  cents a pound. This illustrates the more economical cost of transportation on the larger parcel. In view of the relatively higher costs of postage on smaller parcels, the consumer should order as large a shipment as he can use without loss, so as to reduce the transportation costs to as low a point as possible, for, in the final analysis, the consumer pays the postage costs in the price of the commodities he buys.

Another item of economy to the producer is that his mail box or local post office becomes his shipping station. This relieves him of an extra trip in order to make shipment, as the rural mail carrier takes the shipment from the mail box, or some member of the farmer's family deposits it at the post office when calling for the mail.

Farmers often have small surpluses of produce, not needed for home consumption, which can be marketed if some ready means of getting it to a customer is available. The parcel post supplies this medium. There are also many supplemental or side lines of production which can be developed for the same purpose.

Mutual confidence and helpfulness are needed in order to succeed; cooperation is needed. Consumers are interested in buying by parcel post only when they can secure more satisfactory produce or some advantage in price or both. The producer is not interested in marketing by parcel post unless it means some additional net return to him. A high quality of produce, well prepared, carefully and attractively packed, and forwarded so as to reach its destination at the time desired, will go a long way toward the establishment and continuance of business. Ordinary or inferior produce often loses a customer and hinders the producer in gaining others. The producer must aim to give satisfaction by supplying his customers, as nearly as possible, with produce which meets their individual needs. The consumer must also aim to give satisfaction by caring for and returning containers, by making prompt remittances as agreed upon, and by doing his part in all phases of the transaction. In other words, a square deal is needed.

Parcel post is used by producers to make shipments of butter, eggs, and other commodities to wholesale or other mercantile houses, and to make shipments of cream to the butter factory.

#### ESTABLISHING BUSINESS RELATIONS

In practically every city there are persons who wish to buy fresh produce direct from the farmer, while within 150 miles (first and second parcel post zones) of these cities there are many farmers who wish to market their produce by parcel post. The bringing of these persons into business contact is one of the most difficult problems of parcel post marketing.

#### FRIENDS AND RELATIVES AS CUSTOMERS

Naturally, first contacts are with friends or relatives. For producers who wish to market by parcel post the most satisfactory way of finding customers is to write to friends, relatives, or acquaintances

in cities, seeking their trade. Purchasers often can locate reliable producers by correspondence with friends, relatives, or acquaintances in the country. More than 75 per cent of the produce being marketed by parcel post in a number of cities in which investigations have been made is sent by persons who obtained their customers through friends, relatives, or acquaintances.

Making business contact is less difficult between friends because of the absence of the suspicion and distrust that sometimes is found between strangers. Many persons will not order farm produce from strangers because they do not know the conditions under which the articles are produced, nor the business capacity or the integrity of the farmer.

The method of establishing business relationship through friends is especially recommended for the general farmer who has a limited amount of produce. Those who wish to market a great deal of produce by parcel post will find it necessary to obtain customers by personally soliciting strangers, or by advertising in newspapers, or by other means.

#### SEEKING CUSTOMERS AMONG STRANGERS

Such a farmer would do well to write to acquaintances, asking them to recommend him to others or to supply him with the names and addresses of reliable acquaintances in town who might be interested. The farmer should try to induce such friends to act as city references by answering inquiries as to his dependability and by giving general information. He should supply them with full information. Where the business is to be on a scale which warrants the expense, it should be found effective to supply friends with neatly printed circulars describing the plan and giving lists and prices of produce.

To obtain satisfactory results from advertising, the newspaper selected must have a concentrated circulation among persons to whom the advertisement would appeal. A local church paper might serve the purpose satisfactorily. Usually advertising is not profitable for the general farmer, but often gives satisfactory results to the producer who specializes in some product that can be shipped throughout a considerable part of the year.

Advertisements should be short and should give a description of the goods with the prices, and the name and address of the person advertising. In some cities the Sunday edition of a newspaper gives better results than the daily edition. The person who advertises must offer a product that is wanted by the persons who read the paper at the time the product is advertised, in the places where the paper has a circulation. In other words, he must know what to advertise, when to advertise, and where to advertise.

Mimeographed information and price letters are cheaper, and the producer can make them himself. Mimeograph outfits are relatively inexpensive; as a last resort, hand-written copies can be used.

Circulars sent direct to the hoped-for customer by mail, to succeed, must include two features—the product appeal and the right selection of the “prospect.” Prospective customers can be selected from telephone or city directories, as the directories usually give some clue to kind of business and to residence location. From club

membership list and church news good prospects can often be selected. In all instances the names of heads of families should be used. A knowledge of the better residence portions of the city involved is an essential.

The "product appeal" must be such as to arouse appetite and therefore interest. For instance, in the fall when the weather begins to be cold, something like the following, especially to a former satisfied customer, will usually bring results: "Our all-pork home-made sausage is in season again—easy to get, hard to keep (because so good to eat). Three pounds delivered to your door, \$1." The name and address, naturally, must be included.

The following advertisements are given merely as suggestions; the wording can be changed to meet the conditions of each farmer:

Fresh eggs direct from farm. Send — for 3 dozen delivered by parcel post prepaid. Fair View Farm, Blank, Va.

Butter direct from dairy. Fresh, clean, and sweet. Send — for 2 pounds delivered postpaid by parcel post. Fair View Farm, Blank, Va.

Fresh vegetables for the family. Quality guaranteed. Send — for basket of assorted vegetables delivered postpaid by parcel post. Fair View Farm, Blank, Va.

Cherries from the tree to you by prepaid parcel post. Picked the day they are mailed. Send — cents for — quarts to Fair View Farm, Blank, Va.

Form letters, circulars, or cards sent to a selected list of persons have been suggested as means of obtaining customers for produce by parcel post. In some cases this plan has not been successful. Persons who wish produce of high quality sometimes will not order from a stranger who has not been recommended. The cost of obtaining customers by circularizing is often relatively great, and unless the names of persons to whom the circulars are sent are selected very carefully this method can not be especially recommended.

Customers may be obtained by making a personal canvass in a selected neighborhood in a city. The neighborhood should be one which is not supplied with many markets or green-grocery stores. A suburban district of homes with good incomes offers a good field in which to solicit trade, for in many such districts the delivery service of the groceries is not as satisfactory as in the city.

Success in making a personal canvass depends in a large measure upon the personality of the person making the canvas. He should state his business clearly and concisely, showing the prospective customer why it is advantageous to buy produce by parcel post. He should be neatly dressed, as it is naturally assumed that a person who is careless in other matters will be careless in the preparation of his produce. It is advisable to have samples to show what can be furnished. The samples should represent honestly the produce to be supplied; if they misrepresent, failure is sure to follow. Cards giving the name and address of the producer and the nature of his marketing are useful. A personal canvass usually results in more customers than does advertising or the sending of form letters, as most customers prefer to know the person with whom business is transacted.

If the producer's farm is on or near a much-traveled road, an attractive farm bulletin board placed conspicuously near the road is

a help in making business contact, for many city dwellers travel far out into the country by automobile. This method will be especially useful on clean, well-kept farms. The statements on the board should give the articles for sale, together with their prices delivered to the purchaser's door by parcel post, and the main items should be in lettering large enough to be read quickly. This plan has enabled a number of producers to secure all the customers they could supply.

Warning notices might be placed at a proper distance in each direction from the main bulletin board. The wording on these warning boards should be brief but pointed, as, "Fair View Farm. Read Marketing Bulletin Ahead."

#### HOW A CONSUMER CAN FIND A PRODUCER

Many city dwellers who spend a summer vacation in some neighboring country district can make it their business to become acquainted with farmers and complete arrangements for buying produce by parcel post. In parts of Europe many families consider the making of such arrangements an important feature of their vacation trips. Similarly, a farmer can make desirable connections by meeting city people on their vacations. Such meetings make it possible to settle all details and allow the customer to judge in advance the quality and character of the produce.

Sometimes, under such conditions, it is possible for city consumers to enter into arrangements with a farmer or gardener whereby he will agree to increase the amount of vegetables he grows in his farm garden and to raise certain specialties which the customers may wish to buy. This can even be extended into a sort of partnership arrangement in which the farmer manages a country garden to supply the city consumer's table. Under this arrangement the city consumer practically has a kitchen garden of his own, though it may be many miles distant.

In some instances the consumer will wish to make contact with a producer by inserting an advertisement in some paper known to circulate in the section of country in which he thinks a suitable producer may be found. A suggested form for such an advertisement follows:

A Baltimore family of six wants a gardener or truck farmer to supply it regularly with fresh assorted vegetables by parcel post once a week throughout the year. For particulars address —.

The number constituting the family to be supplied, the frequency of shipment, and the portion of year during which the shipments are desired can be stated. For instance, some families might need shipments twice a week as a rule, but might want none during July and August because of absence from the city.

#### TRIAL ORDERS

The producer who wishes a customer may seek the privilege of making a trial shipment. A plan for the trial shipment should be worked out completely, so that the prospective customer can be shown the quality, quantity, and general variety that can be shipped and the

total cost for such a shipment delivered at his house. If possible, the size of the customer's family should be learned and an offer made of a shipment that will supply fresh vegetables to such a family for a specified number of days.

If the prospective customer is known to be reliable, the farmer should be willing to make the first or sample shipment at his own risk. The condition should be made that the customer is to be judge of value received and that if the goods in the trial shipment are not entirely satisfactory in quality or in price, the customer's opinion as to what they are worth will be accepted and the bill adjusted or a refund made. Where the reliability of the prospective customer is entirely unknown to the producer it is preferable to have a cash transaction with the first order. The producer should remember that the customer has no more business reason for trusting him than he has for trusting the customer, and he should make it clear that he will be glad to make any adjustment necessary in the transaction so as to leave the customer entirely satisfied.

The situation is exactly reversed when the city family seeks to induce a farmer to ship products. It is only fair to send cash with the first order and continue the cash business until credit arrangements satisfactory to both sides can be established.

#### RECORDS AND CORRESPONDENCE

A book should be provided so that a record can be kept of each shipment. It should provide a permanent record of the date of shipment, customer's name and address, the product and quantity sent, the price and amount of bill, and the weight of shipment. Other items of value may be recorded, as kind and cost of container, credit for return of containers, net amount of bill, and date of payment.

The form shown below provides for such a record. The keeping of records of this kind requires considerable work, but is desirable if the business is large. Such columns as are not wanted can be omitted from the form. If a farmer is shipping to but one or two customers it may not be advisable to keep such complete records, but some record should be kept of every shipment. If shipments are made to a number of persons an alphabetical list of customers can be kept.

FORM.—*Suggestion for record of shipments*

Date of shipment	Customer's name	Address	Quantity shipped	Kind of produce

In conducting a mail-order business much depends on correspondence. As comparatively few persons like to write letters, producers should do all they can to carry on direct marketing in such a way

as to require few letters from their customers. But the very nature of mail-order business, even with the use of the most simplified system, necessitates correspondence. Farmers must answer correspondence and inquiries from customers or prospective customers. This should always be done promptly, whether the answer is favorable or not. Many persons who have had their names listed by postmasters as willing to supply produce by parcel post have failed to make reply when they received inquiries. Business can be secured and retained only by using businesslike methods, which should be simple but which must be prompt. The name and full address of the writer should always be given, as failure to do this often prevents reply to important business correspondence. A regular letterhead will be found useful. A simple and businesslike printed letterhead can be obtained without much cost. (See form.) It should give the name and location of the farm, the farmer's name, and may give a simple statement of the business. Elaborate and highly colored letterheads with illustrations of buildings, fruits, or animals should be avoided.

*FORM.—Suggestion for letterhead*

FAIR VIEW FARM  
John Brown, Proprietor  
Produce Shipped by Parcel Post Direct from the Farm

Blank, Va., \_\_\_\_\_, 192\_\_.

**SIMPLIFYING MAIL ORDERS**

The first letter sent by the producer, in seeking to establish parcel post marketing relations, should explain the plan clearly and should tell the customer exactly what can be furnished and how much, exactly the amount of money the goods will cost delivered, and when and how they will be delivered. Similarly the customer in seeking a producer should tell as explicitly as he can what he wants, when he wants it, and should give a general idea as to prices. The first letter also should establish clearly the reliability of the writer. Unless all these points are fully covered at the start, both producer and consumer may feel uncertain about proceeding further in the matter.

**BLANKS AND FORMS**

Blank statement forms or invoices to fill in and inclose with shipments should be used to save trouble. The price can be entered on a blank piece of paper, but the use of a printed statement form is recommended for those who send produce to persons who pay at stated times. The following form may be used either for an invoice with each shipment or for rendering a monthly statement. A bill or statement covering more than one shipment must not be inclosed in a parcel, as it is first-class mail matter.

If a carbon copy of the invoice or statement is made, it can be retained as a record of the transaction.

FORM.—*Suggestion for bill or statement*

BLANK, VA., \_\_\_\_\_, 192---

M \_\_\_\_\_ Dr.  
\_\_\_\_\_

To FAIR VIEW FARM

JOHN BROWN, Proprietor.

Year and month	Day of month	Quantity	Article	Price	Amount	Remarks

FORM.—*Suggestion for record of shipments*

Kind of container	Weight		Local country price	Cost of container	Postage	Amount of bill	Credit for container returned	Net amount of bill	Date of payment
	Lbs.	Oz.							

## REDUCING HANDWRITING TO A MINIMUM

The plan which calls for the least correspondence is the regular weekly shipment of a definitely priced quantity or an assortment of products, the producer first learning what the consumer wants and what he does not want. If this plan is not used it is necessary for the farmer to send his customers, from time to time, a list of the products he has for sale and their prices. The customers then make up their individual orders.

The writing of a list each week by hand will be found troublesome, particularly if the producer has several customers, each of whom must be supplied with a copy. This labor may be avoided by having printed or mimeographed lists of all the products that will probably be available for sale during the season. After the name of each product there should be a blank space in which the current price of that product may be entered. Before each name another blank space should appear, in which the customer can enter the amount of that product wished. He can then return the list as an order. As shown in the accompanying form, this sheet can be so worded as to constitute a price list, an order blank, and a statement of products which will be available one or two weeks ahead.

FORM.—*Suggestion for order blank for cash customers*

To Fair View Farm, Blank, Va.: -----, 191....

Inclosed find \$-----, for which please send me by parcel post, charges pre-paid, items I have checked.

----- doz. eggs	@ -----	per doz.	\$-----
----- lbs. butter	@ -----	per lb.	-----
----- lbs. dressed poultry	@ -----	per lb.	-----
-----	@ -----	per -----	-----
-----	@ -----	per -----	-----

Total-----

Sign here -----

Street and number -----

City ----- State -----

Postage extra beyond second zone.

The same blank could be used for credit customers by striking out the words "Inclosed find \$----- for which."

An easier means of sending out price lists for securing orders is the double or return postal card. The list should be printed on the back of the return half of the card and the producer's name and address written or printed on the face. The first or initial half of the card should bear on its face the name and address of the customer, and the back may be used for comment on the availability of certain fruits or vegetables or for other necessary correspondence. The customer can tear off the reply half, indicate the amount of each article wanted, sign his name, and mail the card. This system costs in postage but little more than one letter, whereas the system outlined in the preceding paragraph requires two letters—one from the farmer to the customer and one in return.

Another plan is for the producer to have his list of articles printed on single postal cards, with spaces for him to enter prices and for the consumer to enter the order.

Should the farmer not care to buy stamped cards, he can have the price list printed on the back of a self-addressed mailing or post card, which is forwarded to the customer in an envelope. The customer needs only to fill in the card, affix the necessary postage, and mail.

The cost of issuing a price list in blank could be reduced materially by the cooperation of several farmers. Such a list should show all the products raised by the group, but could be used by the individual producer in dealing with his own customers. Where such brief forms are used the farmer should occasionally write a personal card or note to his customer to show interest, explain seasonal changes in the nature of shipments, or furnish information as to fruits or vegetables soon to be ready for market. This may be done on the initial half of the return postal card. If possible, space should be left on the return half of the postal card for the customer to note the condition of the previous shipment or make suggestions as to goods wanted.

## ARRANGING PRICES

Many farmers have an erroneous idea as to the prices that city dwellers pay or are willing to pay for farm produce. On the other hand, not a few city purchasers think that the farmer receives a low price for his produce when he sells it. In attempting to market by

parcel post, farmers too often ask exorbitant prices, and city consumers often expect to receive produce at prices which would allow no profit to the farmer if he sends small quantities by parcel post.

Consumers will not pay more than the city price unless a superior article is obtained. Farmers will not market by parcel post unless they can obtain enough over the price otherwise obtainable to pay for container, postage, and extra labor. A proper understanding of both sides of this question will assist both producers and consumers in agreeing on prices. Consumers should bear in mind that many farmers who have local markets sell ungraded or partly graded produce, and if graded produce of high quality is furnished by parcel post a higher price must be expected.

It is advisable to have some basis from which to figure prices of certain kinds of produce, as misunderstandings and distrust about prices have caused much dissatisfaction with direct marketing. The use of the local country price or the wholesale city price as a basis has proved satisfactory in most cases. The farmer can readily ascertain the amount that he must charge above his local price when he considers the cost of container and postage and the extra labor involved. If satisfactory to both, a contract price for a stated period can be made. An agreement must be reached as to whether the price includes all charges for produce, container, and postage. It has been found that purchasers usually prefer to have quoted to them a price which includes all charges. Whatever agreement is made as to prices the farmer should abide by it strictly and give his customers no cause for distrust.

The fewer changes in prices the easier the business is to transact and the better satisfied the customer will be, provided the goods and prices are right.

#### PRICES BY THE YEAR

Because of unequal production and wide variation of prices it is often difficult for persons to agree on a uniform year-round price for produce engaged by the year. Only when the producer can fill orders at all seasons and each party is sure of the reliability of the other is this plan feasible. Usually when eggs or other farm products are high in price and production is small, the farmer must stop shipments temporarily, which is hardly fair to the consumer who has paid more than the market price through the summer with the expectation of receiving produce in winter at a price lower than the market quotations. Nor is it fair, after the farmer has shipped eggs at a low price through the winter, for his customers to inform him that they are to take a vacation of a month and will not need eggs during a month when he has been expecting to make a profit. But in all cases where a standing price can be made satisfactory at both ends it is to be recommended.

#### CITY MARKET REPORTS

Many farmers and most city consumers have access to daily market reports in the newspapers and can base prices on them. Unfortunately, such reports vary in different newspapers, and often producers and consumers do not see the same reports, but where both receive the same newspaper the market reports may prove satisfactory as a basis.

#### ALLOWING THE FARMER TO NAME THE PRICE

If an order blank is not used and the consumer is assured that the farmer understands business methods and is conscientious and fair-minded, he may allow the farmer to set the prices after the order is received. Protests may be made at any time, and if developments are unsatisfactory trade may be stopped. Many consumers have used this method with satisfaction to themselves and the farmer. The local country price may be used by the farmer as a basis from which to determine the amount to be charged. There is danger that some producers will overcharge because of an erroneous idea of city market prices or because of a lack of knowledge of basic business principles. Reports of high city retail prices should not receive serious consideration as a basis, for such high prices usually are of short duration and often represent the sales of fancy articles to a few wealthy consumers.

#### ALLOWING THE CONSUMER TO NAME THE PRICE

Some farmers furnish produce at prices that are decided upon by their customers, but this plan is acceptable to very few farmers. Consumers can use their city retail market price as a basis for determining what they care to pay. For this plan to be satisfactory to both parties the consumer either must effect a saving or obtain a better product, while the farmer must receive a better price than he can get at his local market.

#### FIGURING PRICES IN ASSORTMENT SHIPMENTS

Unless confidence between buyer and seller has developed to such an extent that the producer feels free to ship on his own judgment, with the certainty that the consumer will accept his price as fair, the producer who is selling from list must give great care to determining the gross price he is to ask and his net profit. This is somewhat difficult, as the producer must bear in mind the bulk and weight of vegetables and fruits, the weight of container and packing, and the bulk that he can get into a package, with reference both to postage and to size and weight limits of parcel-post packages. The cost in time and material for proper packing also must be considered. The shipments should be so adjusted that the quantity of each kind shipped will be enough for a proper serving of the consumer's family. In endeavoring to satisfy the customer the producer must bear in mind the retail prices for similar products in the cities. In making an assortment, especial care must be exercised not to include in it too much of a heavy and low-priced product but to give the customer good total value.

Possibly the easiest way for the farmer to make profitable assortments is to determine what he wishes to receive net for each product and then, after figuring out the weight or bulk of a typical portion, to add a proper allowance for postage and packing. If he can figure his price throughout in terms of pounds, it will be easier to figure the delivery price, including postage. But after some experience the producer should be able to distribute cost of packing and postage on a percentage basis. Under this plan he can easily determine how many pounds of each product he can afford to include for a given gross price, including postage.

When the price is to cover the return postage on the containers, this item should be included with the postage. The easiest plan of settling for postage on return of containers, if the customer buys the stamps, is to deduct this amount from the price of the next shipment following the return of the containers. An addressed return label for use on the empty containers can be furnished by the farmer.

#### ARRANGING PAYMENTS

Difficulty in arranging for payments hinders the growth of direct marketing. The farmer prefers cash in advance for his produce. This system is not satisfactory to many consumers because of the necessity of making frequent payments and because the exact price is not always known. But the farmer should never send produce without payment in advance to a stranger who has not exchanged recommendations with him. Although the majority of persons are honest and will pay for produce received by parcel post, unfortunately there are persons who order farm products without intention of paying. A few such losses will reduce the farmer's profits materially.

Consumers who have not been recommended should not expect producers to send goods by parcel post without having received payment. It is easier for producers to furnish satisfactory references than for many persons in cities, as in the country nearly everyone is known by the postmaster and the local banker. If a producer furnishes satisfactory references, the consumer should be willing to send cash in advance until the producer has opportunity to learn of the reliability of the person to whom he is sending produce.

If a prospective customer furnishes references, the producer before sending produce should write to the persons to whom he has been referred, as anyone, no matter how unreliable, can send the names of persons as references. In many instances producers have been satisfied when the mere names were furnished, and no effort has been made to ascertain the reliability of the person who sent the names. When unable to collect the money for produce sent these farmers have learned that the persons whose names had been used as references were no more reliable than those who had furnished the names. Persons whose names are furnished by prospective customers should be business or professional men if possible.

If a producer is satisfied as to the reliability of his customers, credit should be extended and settlements required periodically, say each month. This will prove more economical and satisfactory than the cash-in-advance system. An invoice should accompany each shipment and the bill sent in at the end of the month should be a summary and total of the various invoices.

Parcel-post shippers should consider that they are entering upon a small retail business, where they must necessarily encounter the disadvantages under which a retailer always labors. One of the most difficult of these is the proper use of credit. Some retail business houses have been ruined by the refusal of such credit, and many others have been ruined by the too liberal extension of it. When properly used, the extension of credit to parcel-post customers is often satisfactory, but it must be remembered that extending credit

is a business proposition and requires a knowledge of business relationship.

The collect-on-delivery service of the Post Office Department may be used to advantage when sending packages of considerable value, but it is thought by most persons to be too expensive for ordinary farm-produce shipments. When this service is used it eliminates the danger of loss of payment.

#### ADJUSTING DIFFERENCES

The producer who establishes a mail-order business in farm produce must expect to receive complaints. Upon receipt of a shipment, a customer may be dissatisfied with the quality or appearance of the produce, which may have been caused by rough handling or delay in delivery. Sometimes, when shipments of this kind are received, a customer writes a letter to the producer accusing him of unfair business methods. In instances of this kind the producer may be tempted to write a discourteous letter in reply, but he must bear in mind that no business man can afford to do so, no matter how unfair the letter received may seem.

The success of persons who have sold goods by means of mail orders is due largely to their guaranty to give satisfaction or to refund the money. Because they have adhered strictly to this guaranty the confidence of the buying public has been firmly established, and through recommendations of satisfied customers the business has grown from year to year. Many customers who were dissatisfied with the quality of produce received from a person who sold by mail later became satisfied customers and good advertisers because of a prompt adjustment of the matter. There is no better way of establishing confidence and eliminating distrust than by the prompt adjustment of differences. If a producer becomes convinced that a customer is unfair and unreasonable, he should write a letter telling him that his trade is no longer desired. This letter should never be discourteous, if for no other reason than because antagonism never pays profits to a person in business.

If, in all dealings, a producer is prompt, fair, and reliable, he will be able to obtain and retain business that otherwise would be lost. A producer who undertakes a business in parcel-post marketing can not hope to make great profits nor to build up a large business in a short time, but proper business relations with consumers will increase business and aid in success.

#### AGREEMENTS

The nature of the agreement, whether reduced to writing or not, should be made to suit the circumstances and must be fair to both. Some may wish to have the first agreement in writing; but later, if mutual confidence has been thoroughly established, the contract may be verbal.

The agreement, if written, should specify: (1) Names of the parties to the agreement, (2) length of time during which the agreement is to be in force, (3) quantity of produce to be shipped periodically during the time the contract runs, (4) price to be paid during the time of the contract, together with the base on which the price is

fixed, (5) method of adjusting claims, (6) that the consumer is to open containers properly (without damaging), take proper care of them, and return them by mail if desired by the producer, and (7) frequency of payment and manner of remitting; postage paid on empties returned to the producer to be credited to the consumer on next bill rendered.

#### CONTAINERS

The cost and treatment of containers have much to do with success in marketing by parcel post. A container should be cheap, neat, and light. The amounts involved in most parcel-post shipments of farm produce do not warrant the use of an expensive, heavy package because of the first cost and the charges for postage. The container should be adapted to the particular produce shipped and should be whole, in good condition, and clean.

The trouble of returning empty containers often influences people to discontinue parcel-post buying. The city dweller has little room to keep containers, and it is not practicable to return them singly, for the relative cost of postage is high on small parcels. But it is often inconvenient to take a bulky package to the post office. If the customer can not conveniently store them and return a number at one time the producer should, if possible, use containers that are cheap enough for a single service. Containers should never be bought with price as the only consideration, however, as they should be strong enough to carry the contents safely. For many shipments, cheap splint baskets are satisfactory and the cost is so small as to make their return unnecessary.

Many containers are made in "knockdown" style; that is, they can be taken apart and folded into a much smaller package. Containers which are knocked down to be returned should be so packed that no edges or points project without support or protection, as such projections are likely to be broken or crushed in the mails.

Since the return of containers will have some effect on the price of purchases, the spirit of thrift should cause the consumer to take care of all returnable empties and to send them back in accordance with whatever agreement or understanding may exist.

#### APPEARANCE OF PARCELS AND PRODUCE

The appearance of the parcel depends almost entirely upon the manner in which it is prepared. A supply of good, tough paper of the proper size to wrap parcels and good, strong, though not a heavy cord or twine, that stretches very little, should be obtained. Whatever the nature or style of container, it should be of good appearance, for the appearance of the parcel when it is delivered often determines the attitude of the customer toward the contents of the parcel.

The consumer has come to expect a uniform product and will not be satisfied with a shipment of miscellaneous ungraded produce. As the sending of anything but high-grade material will result in failure to retain trade, and as many persons have discontinued ordering produce by parcel post because they received one shipment that was unsatisfactory in quality, it is better for a producer to decline an order than to send goods not up to a satisfactory standard. The

produce should be uniform in size, color, and quality and should be packed so that the contents and container will carry properly, arrive in good condition, and present a satisfactory appearance.

Quality is important and should be uniform. With many consumers it is more of an object than is price. Probably more produce is judged by appearance than by quality; the two should go together. Some farmers are prone to think of the likes and dislikes of the purchaser as whims and fancies, whereas, as a business principle, he should endeavor to cater to the wishes of his customers. It is known that white eggs sell better to certain trade in New York, while brown eggs bring a premium in Boston. The average farmer cares little whether eggs are white or brown, but this indifference should not overrule any preference the customer may have expressed.

#### VARIETIES OF PRODUCE AND CONTINUOUS SUPPLY

Many persons do not market by parcel post because they do not have a large variety of produce or because their supply is available only part of the year. A continuous supply of a number of products is more satisfactory to customers, but such a supply is not absolutely necessary in order to establish a parcel-post trade. Many persons have secured customers by specializing in one or two kinds of produce, such as butter or eggs, which can be supplied during the entire year, and then these customers have offered an outlet for other commodities which can be furnished only occasionally or for produce which is rarely to be had on city markets. In most of these cases it was necessary only to send a letter or card to satisfied regular customers asking them if they wished to obtain certain kinds of produce that were for sale at that time. Such letters tend to keep up a personal relationship between the producer and his customers, which makes it easier to keep up business relations. It should be kept in mind, however, that a constant supply to fill all orders and avoid disappointments is an important factor in building up and maintaining a business.

#### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, has established standard grades for most fruits and vegetables. In cases where customers wish such grades to be used the producer can obtain copies of the grade standards and specifications by writing to that bureau for them. These standardized grade specifications have been used as the basis of the general suggestions that follow as to grading the various fruits and vegetables.

#### FRUITS

##### APPLES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Apples lend themselves readily to parcel-post marketing. There is a promising field for shipping fancy eating apples direct. As cooking apples are lower in price they can not be marketed as economically direct to the consumer. But when there is sufficient difference between the market price the consumer has to pay and the price the producer can obtain, even cooking apples may be so marketed.

Any container which will carry the apples safely and protect them from damage can be used. The container must be such as to keep the pack in good shape and must be tied or otherwise secured, so that the fruit will not be bruised from handling in the mails. Small quantities may be shipped in climax or splint baskets if well packed, as shown in Figure 1; larger quantities require more substantial containers.

Apples should be well-grown specimens, the proper shape and size for the variety, of normal color, and never overripe. They should be sound, clean, free from damage by worms or other pests, free from disease, skin punctures, or other defects. No fruit that has fallen to the ground should be used for direct marketing.

CHERRIES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED FOR SWEET CHERRIES)

All cherries should have the stems on and when possible should be clipped from the tree with scissors instead of being pulled. They



FIG. 1.—A good pack of apples in climax baskets. The style of lid, left basket, allows a fuller, rounder pack

should be gathered at the proper state of maturity but should not be overripe. Cherries pulled from the stems decay quickly. Unless the customer agrees to have them pulled from the stems that method of picking should not be used. Soft, bruised, overripe, bird-picked, hail bruised, and all other defective fruit should be kept out. The accompanying illustration (fig. 2) shows four 8-quart crates of cherries that had actually been shipped by parcel post. As cherries are too tender to ship in bulk, as in a peck or one-half bushel basket, containers supplied with 1-quart baskets or boxes should be used.

CITRUS FRUITS (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED FOR CITRUS FRUITS [FLORIDA] AND CITRUS FRUITS [TEXAS])

There is practically no physical difficulty in shipping citrus fruits—oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and limes—by parcel post. Postage cost is the factor to consider. Limes are not heavy for their value,

and it is possible that small containers carrying a quantity suitable to the soft-drink dispensing trade might make possible a more satisfactory system of distribution than exists at present. Few private homes use enough limes to justify their shipment direct unless they are included in an assorted shipment. The ordinary commercial containers carry citrus fruits satisfactorily by parcel post. For small quantities a crate of half the size of the commercial ones prove satisfactory.

#### CURRENTS

(The bush currant, species *Ribes*, not the small raisin known by the name "currant.") Currants should be picked before becoming over-

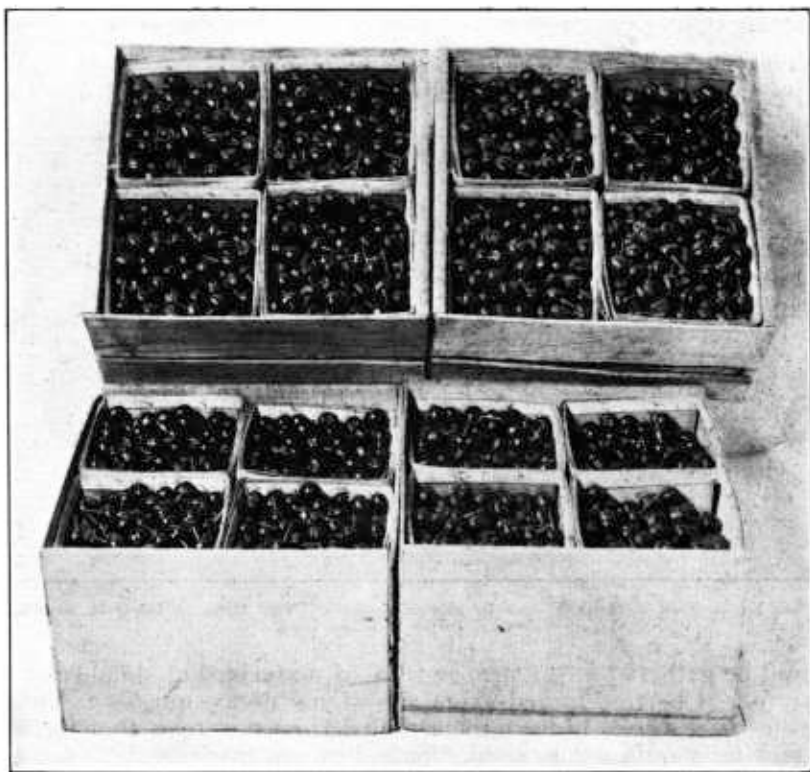


FIG. 2.—Four 8-quart crates of cherries shipped by parcel post. Each crate has two decks or tiers of 1-quart boxes

ripe, and only stems that are fairly full should be included. They should be picked and packed when dry, kept cool, and marketed promptly, as mold develops on them very quickly. They should be shipped in containers supplied with 1-quart baskets or boxes.

#### GRAPES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

For eating purposes, grapes should be allowed to become ripe. Dry, shrunken, cracked, or split, mildewed, undersized, or otherwise

defective grapes should be trimmed out with a pair of blunt scissors or the entire cluster should be discarded. Only full, attractive clusters give satisfaction for table use.

If grapes are wanted for other than table use, the quality need not be quite so high, but only fairly well-filled clusters of good sound grapes should be shipped. Climax baskets, ordinarily used for commercial shipments of grapes, are not strong enough for long-distance parcel-post shipments, but the 6-basket carrier is satisfactory. For smaller quantities stave baskets may be used. As grapes settle considerably, the container should be carefully packed and well filled.

#### BERRIES

Berries should be picked only when dry; they should be removed from the sun, kept as cool as possible, and shipped promptly. They should not be held over from day to day. Defective and cull berries should be kept separate, as gathered, to avoid further handling, as rehandling is injurious to the carrying quality and therefore to the market quality of the berries.

**Dewberries and blackberries** (United States standard grades established).—Dewberries and blackberries should be picked when a full, bright black, but must not be allowed to become too ripe. All defective berries should be excluded. A container of suitable size, supplied with quart baskets, is most suitable.

**Huckleberries and blueberries.**—Huckleberries and blueberries can be shipped by parcel post with satisfactory results, but they are rather difficult to handle. They roll from the tops of the boxes and easily spill out of the crates.

The crates should be relatively tight, and yet they must afford ventilation. The quart baskets should be especially made for this purpose, with tight corners. The ventilation of the crates can best be provided at the top.

In picking, all trash, like leaves and twigs, and all defective berries must be kept out.

**Raspberries.**—As practically all varieties of raspberries are rather difficult to ship, special care must be taken that they be picked only when dry and while still firm, though ripe. They must be carefully handled, crated as picked, and never rehandled. Extra care must be taken to see that the boxes are well filled, because their cuplike shape gives them a tendency to settle in shipping. Containers supplied with pint or half-pint baskets are preferred.

**Strawberries** (United States standard grades established).—Strawberries should be picked when sufficiently ripe to reach the consumer in good condition. They should be picked with the hull or cap on, the stems being pinched short as possible. The berries should be placed in 1-quart baskets as picked and not held until a handful accumulates. This will avoid bruising. Small, inferior, lopsided, dirty, and overripe berries should be placed in separate baskets as picked, but not for market. The quality and size should be the same from top to bottom, and the baskets should be well filled. Topping or facing the baskets with larger fruit should not be done, but all stems of the top layer may be turned down so that the berries will be well shown. They should never be picked wet if it can be avoided.

If the strawberry season happens to have unfavorable weather it may not be possible to make satisfactory parcel-post shipments.

Figure 3 shows a 32-quart crate of strawberries shipped by parcel post. The baskets should have been better filled, as the berries have settled so much that the baskets are no longer filled. There are also 12 and 16 quart and 16 and 24 pint-size crates that are suitable for strawberries.

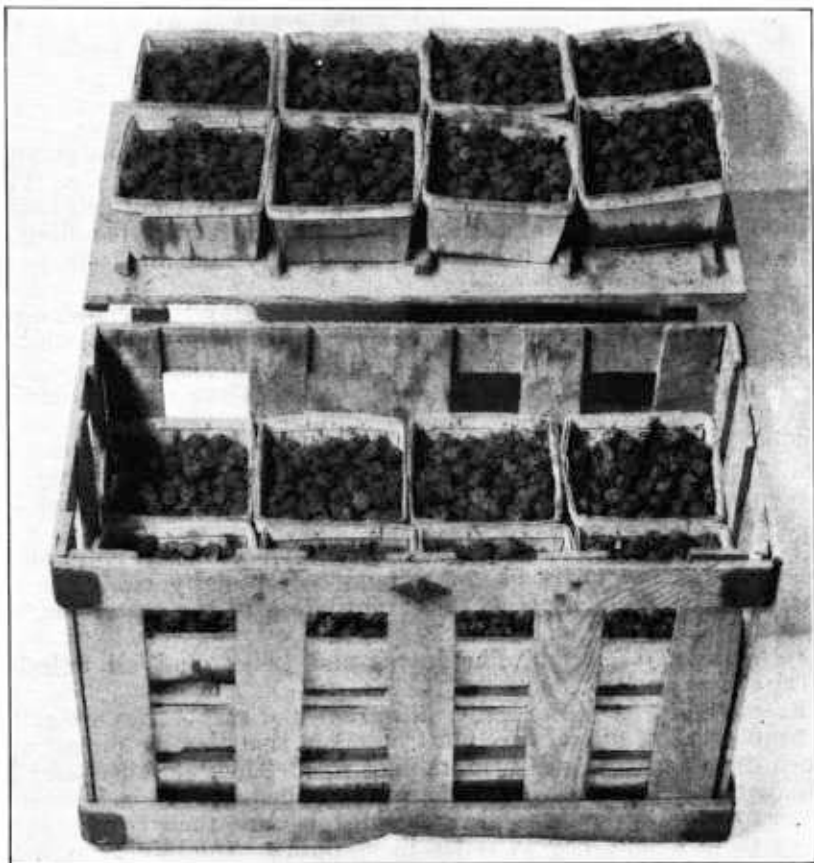


FIG. 3.—A 32-quart crate of strawberries shipped by parcel post. This style of crate is rather heavy for parcel-post use. Crates like those shown in Figure 2 are preferred by most consumers. The baskets should have been better filled

#### PEACHES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

It is important that peaches be handled carefully to prevent bruising. For shipment by parcel post they should be "hard ripe"; that is, matured but showing no softening of the flesh by being full ripe. Varieties should not be mixed unless the customer asks for an assorted shipment. They should be smooth, properly colored for the variety, free from worms, split pits or seeds, bruises, disease, or other defects, and should be the proper size for the variety. They may be shipped either in 6-basket carriers or hampers. (Fig. 4.) Some-

times splint baskets are used. The 6-basket carrier of small jumble-packed fruit is practically unsalable. The 6-basket carrier packed in layers is attractive and draws attention. Peaches should be well and solidly packed to prevent bruising. The bushel basket, and for smaller quantities, stave baskets are satisfactory.

PEARS (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Pears are picked in a matured state though green in color, because few varieties ripen satisfactorily on the tree. They should be picked when fully developed and when the stems will separate readily from the twig. They should be handled carefully, because they bruise and turn black easily. They should be free from worms, bruises, cuts, practically free from disease, specks, blemishes, etc., and of proper size and shape for the variety. No fruit from the ground should be



Fig. 4.—An experimental shipment of peaches in a "Delaware" basket and two "Georgia" or 6-basket carriers. Fruit well graded and packed, as in the upper 6-basket carrier, is much more attractive than the jumble pack of the other containers

shipped. Figure 5 shows a crate of pears that were shipped when too ripe and without being properly packed. Round stave baskets or climax baskets will be found desirable as containers.

PINEAPPLES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Pineapples should be harvested at the proper stage of maturity to reach the consumer in good, sound condition and when not overripe. The regulation commercial containers proved satisfactory in experimental shipments made by parcel post. Containers which are not sufficiently rigid to keep the pack well in place proved undesirable in tests, as they cause the fruit to bruise, although bruising may be prevented if packing material like excelsior is used. But because of the bulk, and therefore the weight of parcels of pineapples, the economy of marketing them by parcel post is relatively limited.

## PLUMS, DAMSONS, AND FRESH PRUNES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Plums, including damsons or preserving plums, and fresh prunes should be picked at such a degree of maturity or approaching ripeness that they will reach the consumer in good, sound, nearly ripe condition. Careful handling is needed to prevent decay in shipping. As these fruits do not ripen uniformly, care must be exercised to cull out the overripe fruit. Cracked, ill-shaped, off-colored, wormy, or otherwise defective fruit should be kept out. One soft plum will wet the plums which touch it and start decay in them. Crates supplied with 1-quart baskets, climax, and stave baskets prove satisfactory as containers.

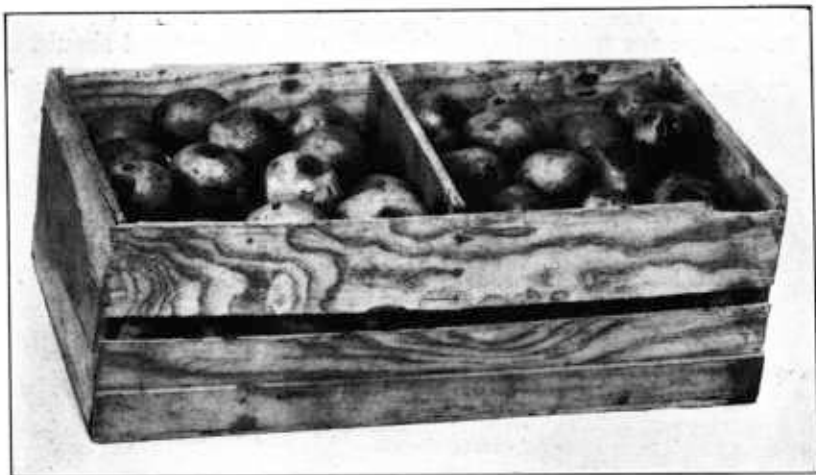


FIG. 5.—Pears which were too ripe when shipped and which were not properly packed were badly bruised and decayed at the journey's end

## VEGETABLES

## ARTICHOKES

Two vegetables are known by the name artichoke. The one is the Globe artichoke, of which the blossom head is the part used; the other is the Jerusalem artichoke, with underground edible tubers.

**Jerusalem artichokes.**—Jerusalem artichokes are little used in this country and present no particular problems in shipping by parcel post.

**Globe artichokes** (United States standard grades established).—Globe artichokes are considered a delicacy. They should be packed in a container that will give protection from bruising, yet give sufficient ventilation to prevent scald.

## ASPARAGUS (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

The tender young shoots of asparagus should be cut often enough so that they do not become tough or overgrown. They should be cut when dry, should be carefully culled, and tied in one-half pound or pound bunches, with the tops even and the bottoms cut off. (Fig. 6.) Wrapping in parchment or similar paper improves the

appearance. Asparagus loses quality according to the length of time between gathering and cooking. The usual commercial container, which is a crate made narrower at the top than at the bottom, to suit the shape of the bunches, can be used in parcel post, but if smaller quantities than a small crate are wanted by the customer, any suitable container that affords protection and ventilation may be used. If the ends of the asparagus are set in a layer of damp moss, drying out will be largely prevented.

## BEANS

**Snap beans, green or wax** (United States standard grades established).—Snap beans, whether bush or pole variety, or whether

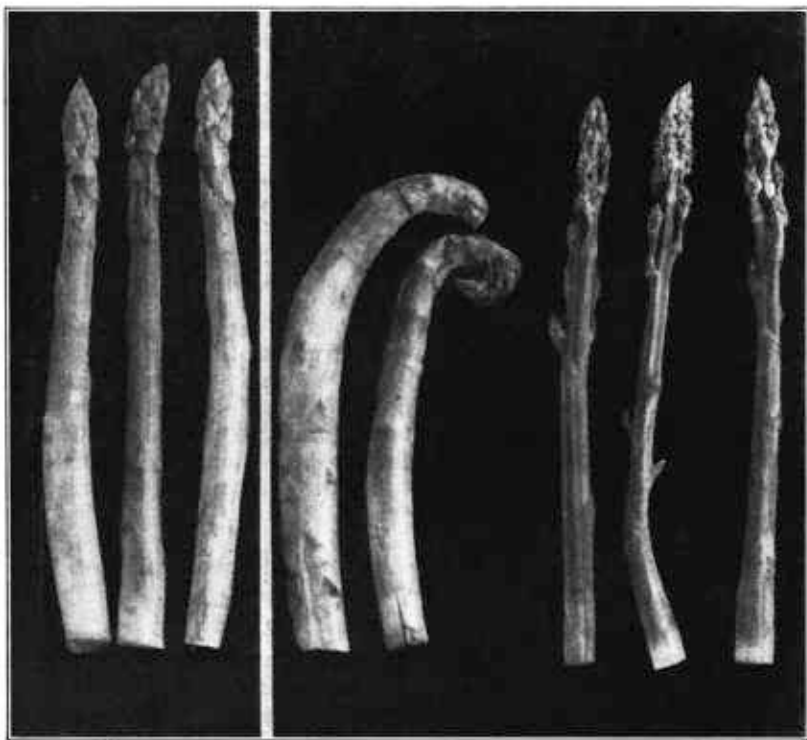


FIG. 6.—Satisfactory (three to left) and unsatisfactory (five to right) stalks of asparagus

green or wax color, should be picked when free from rain or dew, when tender, when crisp enough to snap, and before the seed is large enough to bulge the pod very much, although a few varieties are desirable even after distinct bulging of the pod has occurred. Any defective, rusty, insect-eaten, discolored, or undesirable beans should be sorted out. The beans should always be fresh-picked when shipped. Varieties which have little if any string are always preferred by customers. Any available container that will carry beans properly and keep them fresh with ventilation will serve the purpose. A splint basket makes a good container for beans.

**Lima beans.**—Lima beans should be gathered when dry and may be shipped either in the pods or shelled. When in pods, a box, basket,

or crate can be used as a container. Only good, clean, full pods should be shipped.

Shelled Lima beans should be shipped as soon as possible after being picked and shelled, as they heat easily and soon become spoiled. A splint basket or a container supplied with the ordinary 1-quart berry baskets make a suitable container. As Lima beans shrink noticeably both in size and weight after they are shelled, the producer should allow for the shrinkage and should be sure to ship a full measure. The customer should be told that immediately on receipt of the shipment the beans should be spread out on a table top or suitable place and allowed to cool. Although Lima beans may be kept several days in a refrigerator or other cool place they are likely to become discolored and tough and to lose quality.

**Dry or shell beans.**—Dry or shell beans are not perishable, as are fresh vegetables, and they can be shipped satisfactorily in a bag of any kind of material that is sufficiently strong. If included in miscellaneous shipments, a bag which is less strong may serve the purpose. They should be clean, of practically uniform size, free from disease and insect injury, discolorations, or other defects.

Either ripe or dried Lima beans can be as readily shipped as can dried beans of other kinds.

#### CABBAGE (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

A producer who wishes to market cabbage direct to the consumer should select a variety that produces firm heads that are small to medium sized, of good, tender quality. The heads should be carefully trimmed of waste leaves and the stalks should be cut close to the head; soft, bursting, or decaying heads must be excluded. Because of the weight of cabbage in comparison to its value, direct marketing will not be found feasible, but in shipping of miscellaneous vegetables the cost may be justified.

#### CANTALOUPE, PROPERLY NAMED MUSKMELON (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

To be satisfactory cantaloupes must first of all be of a variety of good quality. As cantaloupes cross-pollinize very readily, care must be taken in producing seed, or a trustworthy seedsman must be patronized. Cantaloupes do not cross-pollinize with pumpkins, squashes, cucumbers, and gourds, as is commonly believed. They should be pulled from the vines when fully netted and when they will nearly part from the vine clean, giving "a half slip," tearing the flesh of the melons a little. This will require care, as melons tend to ripen rapidly under hot-weather conditions. The melons must be firm to reach the consumer without becoming soft or mushy.

Cantaloupes require careful handling, because every bruise lessens the value and attractiveness. No bruised, overripe, matured, poorly netted, or otherwise defective cantaloupes should be included. Cantaloupes should preferably be packed in crates that will hold a given number of the size to be shipped. They can also be shipped successfully in climax or splint baskets if handled properly in transit. A little packing material may be used to prevent bruises in shipping. The melons should be picked in the morning and should be kept in a cool place until shipped.

## CAULIFLOWER AND BROCCOLI (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

The heads of cauliflower and broccoli should be carefully handled when cut from the stalk and at every later stage. In trimming, preparatory to packing, at least one circle of the larger outer leaf stems, besides the smaller ones beneath these, should be left to protect the head. The tops of the leaves should be cut off even with the head. Inferior, discolored, diseased, or insect-damaged, or overgrown, or ricy heads, or heads otherwise defective should not be marketed. They should be packed and shipped promptly after gathering. Paper is sometimes placed over each head and tucked down inside the leaf stems for additional protection. The consumer should be informed that cauliflower should be used as soon after receipt as convenient. Besides being included in miscellaneous assortments of vegetables, cauliflower can be shipped in baskets, boxes, or crates.

## CELERY (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Only firm, fresh, well-bleached, clean celery should be shipped. After gathering, it should be washed and well trimmed of rootlets and loose and discolored leaves and stems. The stalks in each shipment should be of proper length and practically uniform in size, and most consumers prefer celery that has been bleached white. The producer should select a variety which bleaches or blanches readily. The stalk should be freed of water as thoroughly as possible by taking hold of each stalk by the base and giving it a swinging jerk to dislodge water from among the stems. The celery may then be wrapped in paper and packed in a basket, crate, or other container which will allow some ventilation but not enough to cause excessive evaporation and wilting.

In quoting prices on celery care must be taken to state whether the quotation is by the single stalk or by the bunch, if tied in bunches of more than one stalk.

## CORN

**Green sugar corn** (United States standard grades established).—As the sugar content of sugar corn begins to change to starch soon after the ear is pulled from the growing stalk, sugar corn should be packed and shipped as soon as possible after it is gathered. It should be gathered at the stage of growth or development known as “in full milk,” but before showing any signs of denting or toughness. Varieties that do well in the producer’s section and that produce a high quality of product should be grown. All ears marketed should be well filled and well developed and practically free from worms and worm injury or other defects. The ears should be shipped with the husks on in a container that will prevent bruising and will afford some ventilation. In shipping sugar corn farmers should be sure they do not violate the quarantine against European corn borer, Japanese beetle, etc.

**Dried sugar corn.**—Dried sugar corn can be used in the winter when corn is out of season. Producers who can grow good sugar corn and who will give proper attention to drying it have developed a satisfactory business in marketing it direct to the consumer. Only good, bright-colored, dried corn should be shipped. Sweet corn, if dried too quickly, becomes too dark to market, and should be dried only when in the best eating condition as green corn.

**Pop corn.**—Pop corn can be shipped satisfactorily in almost any container. It may be shipped either on cob or shelled. Shelled pop corn costs less to ship than an equal amount of corn on the cob. It should be of a good popping variety and fully ripened on the standing stalk before frost. It should then be stored in a well-ventilated place until thoroughly dried. Only sound, clean corn is acceptable. Farm boys and girls may develop a business in selling pop corn in either popped or unpopped state.

CUCUMBERS (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED FOR SLICING CUCUMBERS)

Cucumbers may be marketed direct to the consumer either for slicing fresh or for pickling. For slicing a variety should be selected which produces long, straight, smooth cucumbers from 6 to 9 inches in length. The cucumbers should be cut and not pulled from the vine. Spongy, crooked, thick and short, yellow, runty, and overlarge

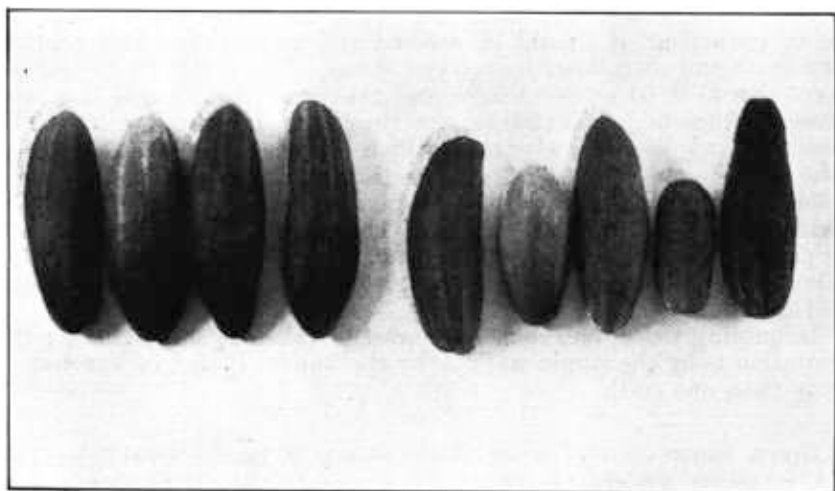


Fig. 7.—Four cucumbers on the left practically uniform in size, shape, and coloring. These are much more attractive and salable than the five irregular and defective specimens (culls) shown on the right

cucumbers and those showing signs of ripening or those having wilted, shrunken, or undeveloped ends should be culled out. (Fig. 7.)

For pickling a good variety for the purpose should be grown and the cucumbers should be of the size wanted by the customer; usually those from 1 to 4 inches in length are wanted.

EGGPLANT (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Eggplant should be cut when the fruits are of proper size and development and before they become tough. Fruits defective from any cause will not be satisfactory. The fruits should be handled carefully, wrapped in paper, and carefully packed. Excelsior or crumpled paper may be used for packing material when necessary to protect the fruit.

KALE

Kale should be fresh, free from sand, dirt, insects, and insect injury, and should be of good green color, without decayed leaves or

stalks shooting seed tops, and of proper size according to the season. Kale carries satisfactorily by parcel post when packed in baskets, crates, or boxes, but it must have ventilation if it is to be more than 24 hours in transit. If not supplied with ventilation it begins to turn yellow rather quickly and loses its edible quality very rapidly.

LETTUCE (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Lettuce for marketing is of two kinds—head and loose leaf. The head varieties are preferred by many people, though the loose-leaf varieties are much used in some parts of the country. A variety or varieties should be produced which yield satisfactorily both in quality and quantity. Head lettuce should be well developed, and the inner leaves should be white or nearly so before cutting. Lettuce should be free from dirt; no discolored, insect-damaged, diseased, or imperfect heads should be shipped. Loose-leaf lettuce should be cut when of considerable size but tender and crisp, and the old outer leaves should be trimmed off. Lettuce should be dry when packed.

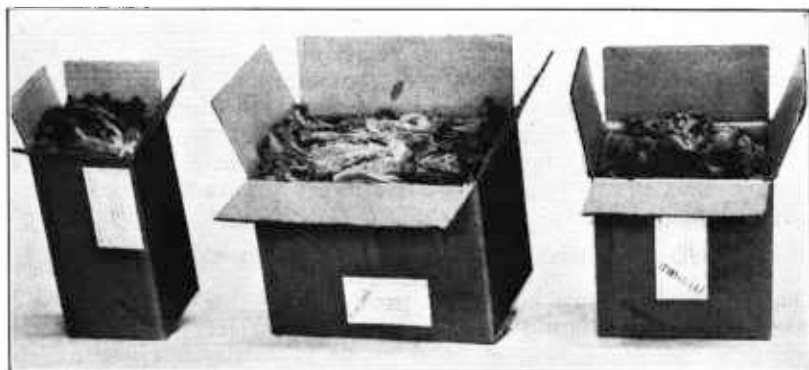


FIG. 8.—Lettuce, loose-leaf type, shipped in corrugated paperboard containers, which carry it satisfactorily

Almost any kind of container will serve for lettuce. If properly gathered and shipped dry, with instructions to the customer that it should be put in cold water on receipt, to replace evaporated water content and freshen it, it may be shipped long distances. Figure 8 shows loose-leaf lettuce shipped in corrugated paperboard containers. Lining the container with parchment paper improves the carrying possibilities.

ONIONS

**Onions, green spring.**—Onions should be pulled before they are too old or tough to prove satisfactory; they should be properly cleaned and trimmed and tied in bunches, with the tops left on or trimmed off as the customer wishes. Any suitable container may be used that will keep them clean and free from bruising. If green, though well-grown bulb onions are wanted, they may be prepared by cleaning and cutting off the roots and tops.

**Onions, dry** (United States standard grades established for Bermuda, northern grown, and creole onions).—All dry onions should be ripe, well cured, dry, and free from rot, disease, and insect injury,

and clean. Onions of practically uniform size and shape give better satisfaction than irregular ones. No sprouted or frozen bulbs should be included.

PEAS, FRESH OR GREEN (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Peas should be picked at a proper state of development and should be shipped in the pod. They should be gathered when dry; colored pods or any pods which are hard ripe or beyond a proper state of tenderness, or are poorly filled, diseased, insect-injured, or otherwise defective or dirty should be kept out. A basket, crate, or hamper which allows ventilation is the most satisfactory container for peas. If not allowed ventilation, the peas are likely to heat and mold.

PEPPERS

**Peppers, sweet** (United States standard grades established).--Peppers should be well grown and of uniform size and color. No wilted, cracked, or dirty, diseased fruit should be included. They should be crisp when shipped and be so packed that the fruits will not be crushed, cracked, or split. Most users of sweet peppers want a variety which has outer walls of relatively thick flesh.

**Peppers, hot.**—Hot peppers may be supplied according to the wishes of the customer. If the producer saves his own supply of pepper seed it must be kept in mind that if both hot and sweet peppers are grown in the same garden or truck patch they will cross-pollonize, and many peppers on the sweet plants will be more or less hot.

POTATOES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Occasionally it may be found profitable to market potatoes by parcel post. They should be of a good table variety; they should be clean, smooth, sound, and of good grade generally. Those affected with sunburn, disease, second growth, and bruises should be culled out. Potatoes less than 2 inches in diameter should not be shipped; the size should be fairly uniform.

New potatoes especially may at times be economically included in assorted parcels of vegetables. When shipped loose the container may be a bag, box, crate, or basket; but if shipped in a bag they are likely to be bruised and injured, unless the distance be short. Potatoes are perishable and should be handled accordingly. Occasionally a consumer may want small potatoes for such purposes as making salad. These can be supplied at a somewhat lower price than larger ones.

PUMPKINS AND WINTER SQUASHES

Pumpkins and winter squashes are heavy in weight in comparison with their value and usually can not be economically shipped direct, but at times the price returns may make it feasible to market them by parcel post. They should be of good quality and in good condition. The producer should endeavor to supply the variety, size, shape, and color wanted by the customers. Any available container which will prevent bruising and yet carry well will serve the purpose. Small-sized pumpkins and squashes can conveniently be included in assorted shipments.

## SPINACH (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Spinach should be of good green color, free from yellow or decayed leaves, crisp, free from insect injury, and of proper size according to the season and the market requirements. If necessary, should be thoroughly washed to free it from earth and sand. Unwashed spinach ships better than washed.

A plant called New Zealand spinach (not a true spinach) produces freely and continuously throughout the hot weather of the summer until killed by frost. For summer greens it has been found desirable.

## SQUASH, SUMMER

Summer squash should be of the kind and degree of maturity wanted by the customer. Diseased, insect-injured, poorly developed squash should be excluded. A little packing material prevents bruises.

## RHUBARB

Rhubarb, which is in season in the late winter and spring, and which may be produced in a cellar or other indoor place if properly handled, should be of as good size as possible and should be pulled before it becomes tough or strong. It is usually tied in bunches of three to six stems. Leaves should be removed before direct marketing, and only fresh, clean, well-developed stalks or stems should be shipped. A basket, crate, or box which allows some ventilation should be used.

## ROOT VEGETABLES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED FOR BUNCHED BEETS, BUNCHED RADISHES, AND BUNCHED TURNIPS, AND FOR BUNCHED AND TOPPED CARROTS)

Root vegetables may be divided into bunched vegetables and matured or main crop. Beets, carrots, radishes, salsify, and turnips when grown as early crops are frequently tied in bunches. This is desirable for two reasons: First, to keep the roots as nearly fresh as possible until used, and second, some consumers use the tops either as greens or for cooking with the vegetables themselves, as beets. Root vegetables with the tops left on will frequently pack more readily if not tied in bunches. When the consumer is satisfied to have the tops removed the shipment can be made more economically. The new or early root vegetables should be marketed when large enough, but still in tender condition. The mistake should not be made of shipping old, overgrown roots of early varieties of root crops, as they will not give satisfaction.

Main crop or matured root vegetables are usually firmer than early crop root vegetables and can have the tops cut off entirely. All root vegetables should be properly developed, tender, fresh, sound, and clean, with overgrown, oversized, or those with hard stringy cores sorted out. A bucket, basket, or crate is satisfactory as a container for root vegetables.

## SWEET POTATOES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Sweet potatoes should be of good shape and color for the variety; they should be clean, sound, and bright, and those which are small should be discarded. Many persons like sweet potatoes of medium

and fairly uniform size. They must be handled carefully, as bruises and cuts not only cause poor appearance but are likely to start decay. Chilling should be prevented.

Sweet potatoes are of two types: The one is dry and mealy, the other is moist and sweet. The producer should grow the kind wanted by his customer, and they should be well matured and properly cured. (The curing and storing of sweet potatoes is treated in Farmers' Bulletin 1442.<sup>1</sup>) Sweet potatoes can easily be included in assorted shipments. If sweet potatoes are shipped alone, a container



FIG. 9.—“Bunched” vegetables. From left to right: Long radishes, onions, beets, carrots, and round radishes

should be used that will protect them from bruises and, in cold weather, from the cold. A bag is not suitable.

#### TOMATOES (UNITED STATES STANDARD GRADES ESTABLISHED)

Considerable care must be taken in picking, handling, and packing tomatoes to prevent their being bruised, cracked, or mashed. The stems should be removed. If for immediate use, the tomatoes may be practically ripe, but must be sound and firm. If the customer

<sup>1</sup> THOMPSON, H. C. STORAGE OF SWEET POTATOES. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bul. 1442, 22 p., illus. 1925.

wants a supply for several days or a week, the tomatoes may be picked in the various stages of ripening, so as to ripen according to the customer's needs. No ill-shaped, split, wormy, or otherwise defective tomatoes should be shipped for eating purposes. A fairly uniform size proves most satisfactory. Any basket or crate in which a good firm pack can be made will serve as a container. If shipped with other fruits or vegetables, tomatoes must be so packed as not to mash. Wrapping each tomato in soft paper improves the carrying possibilities.

#### POULTRY

The great bulk of poultry consumed in this country consists of young and old chickens. What is said here in regard to marketing poultry has particular reference to chickens but may be applied to other kinds of poultry.

Anyone who wishes to market chickens direct to the consumer must endeavor to supply what the consumer wants. Young dressed chickens include broilers, weighing from 1 to 2 pounds; friers, weighing from  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  pounds; and roasting chickens weighing from 4 to 8 pounds. The so-called meat breeds are usually considered much more satisfactory for table use than are the egg breeds. Some consumers prefer a yellow-skinned chicken, whereas one with white skin is preferred by others. Breeds with light-colored feathers usually present a better appearance, as dressed poultry, because of the absence of the dark stains that are left in the skin of dark-feathered fowls when picked.

#### FATTENING POULTRY

Poultry, whether broilers, friers, roasters, or old fowls, must be properly fattened and in good, tender condition to prove satisfactory. Chickens, young or old, having free range on the farm are generally not in prime condition for table use. Fattening is most successfully accomplished by confining poultry to coops in which not more than  $\frac{6}{10}$  square feet of space is available for each young chicken and not more than  $1\frac{1}{3}$  square feet of space is available for each of those half grown or larger. Extensive study and experience show that soft feeds such as a mixture of ground grains, mixed with sour milk or buttermilk, produces much better flesh for table use than that produced by grain feeding. A fattening period of about 10 to 12 days is usually sufficient for young chickens; old ones (fowls) may be fattened in 5 to 7 days.

#### KILLING POULTRY

For 24 hours before chickens are killed they should have water to drink but should have no feed. Feed in the crop or intestines of a chicken when it is killed causes loss of flavor and hastens decay. Chickens may be killed either by cutting off the head or by hanging the chicken by its feet and then inserting a suitable narrow-bladed knife in the mouth and giving a diagonal cut just back of the bony part of the head to sever the main blood vessels in the neck. If this is done properly the chicken will bleed freely. For humane reasons, "braining" should be practiced.

Braining is done by thrusting the knife through the roof of the mouth, into the brain, until the point of the knife touches the skull; the knife should then be given a twist to cause paralysis.

There is a way of piercing the brain by inserting the knife under the eye.<sup>2</sup>

If the chicken is to be dry picked, braining causes the feathers to "let go" or pull easily.

If the chicken is killed by cutting the head off, the skin should be drawn back on the neck so that when the dressing is completed it can be tied over the end of the severed neck. Some customers may want poultry with the head on as they can then judge somewhat whether the fowl was healthy.

Good bleeding is necessary to the production of a first-class dressed carcass, and gives a much better appearance. Hanging up by both legs to keep the carcass in good shape is the best way to get a thorough drainage of blood.

#### DRESSING CHICKENS

A dressed chicken may have the feathers off or the feathers, head, and feet off. In these cases it is more properly described as partly dressed. Or it may have feathers, head, and feet off and be drawn in addition; that is, have the entrails taken out, which would make it fully dressed. Care is needed both to do a good job of the dressing of the fowl and to prevent bruises, broken bones, and scarred or broken skin or soft places in the flesh. Cleanliness in tools and materials used and in work is necessary.

Picking a chicken is accomplished by the scalding method or by dry picking. Some consumers are satisfied with scalded poultry, whereas others want it dry picked. Unless care is exercised, the scalding is likely actually to scald the skin. If this happens, the poultry is not likely to keep as well as dry-picked poultry, because the skin is more likely to be torn. Water just below the boiling point should be used, and the poultry should be scalded only enough to loosen the feathers. This produces a fairly acceptable carcass if done with care. The feet and head of the fowl should not be immersed in the scalding water; they should be washed in cool water after the fowl is picked. Head, legs, and feet should be thoroughly cleaned to give a good appearance.

Dry picking generally produces a more satisfactorily finished product.<sup>3</sup> Figure 10 shows a good dry-picked chicken and one with skin torn from scalding. Dry-picked poultry usually gives better satisfaction than scalded poultry, as it has a better appearance, is of better quality, and keeps longer.

Undrawn fowls may be shipped with head and feet on or removed, as customers request. If the head is removed, the neck skin should be drawn over the severed neck end and tied to keep the end of the neck from being exposed to the air. At the same time the neck can be tied back into place. Both neck and feet should be wrapped in tough wrapping paper and tied with cloth bands, as described later.

Some customers want chickens to be drawn. Although this is somewhat more economical in postage costs, drawing shortens the time of keeping in good condition. Removing the entrails of a

<sup>2</sup> PENNINGTON, M. E., and BETTS, H. M. P. HOW TO KILL AND BLEED MARKET POULTRY. U. S. Dept. Agr., Bur. Chem. Circ. 61: 1-11, illus. 1915. (Revised ed.)

<sup>3</sup> UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS. HOW TO PICK CHICKENS. U. S. Dept. Agr. Misc. Circ. 42, 14 p., illus. 1925.

chicken exposes the internal surface to the air and gives opportunity for decomposition to set in much more quickly than in an undrawn one. If full-dressed poultry is prepared for shipment by parcel post, the dressing must be done carefully and thoroughly. The walls of the abdominal cavity must be thoroughly washed out to remove all blood and refuse. The cavity should then be dried with a cloth on which a little salt has been sprinkled. The giblets should be washed, dried, salted, and tied in a cloth. They will not carry successfully if merely cleaned as for home cooking and placed loosely in the cavity of the fowl, for this may cause decay. In hot weather drawn poultry should not be shipped if it will be in transit any considerable length of time.

#### SHRINKAGE IN DRESSING

Before marketing dressed poultry the producer should know the amount of shrinkage resulting from dressing. Practically every farmer knows what price he can get for live chickens or fowls. This, then, is the basis on which, if need be, prices may be decided. Loss in dressing varies greatly, as it depends on type or breed of fowl, condition, and age. The relative loss in dressing small chickens is greater than in dressing large ones. A well-fattened chicken loses less proportionately in dressing than a

thin, unfattened one. Food in the crop or intestines also has a bearing on the shrinkage. It is not possible to state an average percentage of shrinkage to be expected because of the wide range of shrinkage caused by size, weight, type or breed, and condition. Experimental records and inquiries made of dealers and others show that loss of weight by bleeding and picking varies from 8 to 17 per cent, and in full dressing it varies from 20 to 40 per cent.



FIG. 10.—Comparison of scalded chicken (left) and dry-picked chicken (right)

It is well worth while for each producer to determine for himself how much the shrinkage amounts to in dressing his own chickens. He should make a record of the live weight before killing, the weight after bleeding and picking, and then, if the fowl is fully dressed, a record of the weight after thoroughly cooled, chilled, and ready for packing and mailing.

#### CHILLING DRESSED POULTRY

Dressed poultry, to carry satisfactorily and reach the customer in good condition, must be cooled and, if possible, chilled before packing and mailing. In most of the country during the fall, winter, and spring, when the weather is cool or cold at least at night, the chilling of poultry is easily done. The ideal temperature ranges from 32° to 38° F.; the air should be dry. Such conditions, even in winter, do not always prevail. Care must be taken that a freezing temperature is not reached before the animal heat is thoroughly out of the carcass.

After the dressing has been completed the carcass should be shaped by drawing the thighs close to the body and tying them in place. Cloth bands are tied around the fowl and are kept there until the cooling and chilling is completed. A cord or string should not be used for tying, as it may cause a crease or may even bruise the flesh. The fowl should then be put into a clean dry place and kept there until the body heat has disappeared and the temperature of the body cavity of the fowl is the same as that of the external parts. An indoors temperature of 35° to 40° F., with a circulation of air, is satisfactory if the lower temperature is not available. A spring house or cold cellar may serve as a cooling place. If neither is available, hanging the dressed poultry down into a well, but keeping it dry in a covered vessel, may prove satisfactory if the shipping distance is not great nor the time in transit long.

Dry cooling or chilling is to be preferred, but if no other means are available immersing the dressed poultry in cold water may be resorted to. Care must be exercised to have the carcass cool through. Cooling in water should be done in as short a time as possible, to preserve flavor and quality, and the carcass should be thoroughly dried when the chilling is finished. Head and feet, if not removed, should be cleaned so as not to contaminate the chilling water.

Usually from 12 to 24 hours is required to cool thoroughly a dressed fowl; therefore it is best to cool a dressed fowl the day before it is to be mailed. But if satisfactory cooling facilities are available, cooling in the early morning and mailing in the evening give satisfactory results. In no case should poultry be packed and mailed with body heat yet remaining.

Many kinds of containers have been used successfully in shipping poultry by parcel post. Figure 11 shows a dressed chicken shipped during warm weather in May. The chicken had been properly chilled and was well packed by being wrapped in parchment paper, packed in excelsior, then inclosed in a jacket of corrugated paper board, and finally wrapped in good stout wrapping paper. Although the parcel was in the mails 48 hours, the chicken was in good condition.

Ready-made containers can be obtained, or they may be improvised from corrugated paper-board boxes, such as are readily obtained at many places without cost. Strict care must be observed

that no odors of any kind are on the packing materials, especially on the corrugated paper-board boxes, as poultry readily absorbs odors and its value as food is greatly reduced or destroyed. Figure 12 shows an improvised box scored; that is, creased with a blunt knife, but not cut through. Figure 13 shows the box when packed, folded, tied, and ready for mailing. It is not necessary to improvise a box container if care is taken that at least two thicknesses of corrugated paper-board covers the parcel and that it is tied securely.

Splint baskets have been used with success. (Fig. 14.) If they are to be used more than once, they should be of the drop-handle style so as to nest one into the other; they can then be returned to the producer a number at a time in one package. Climax baskets

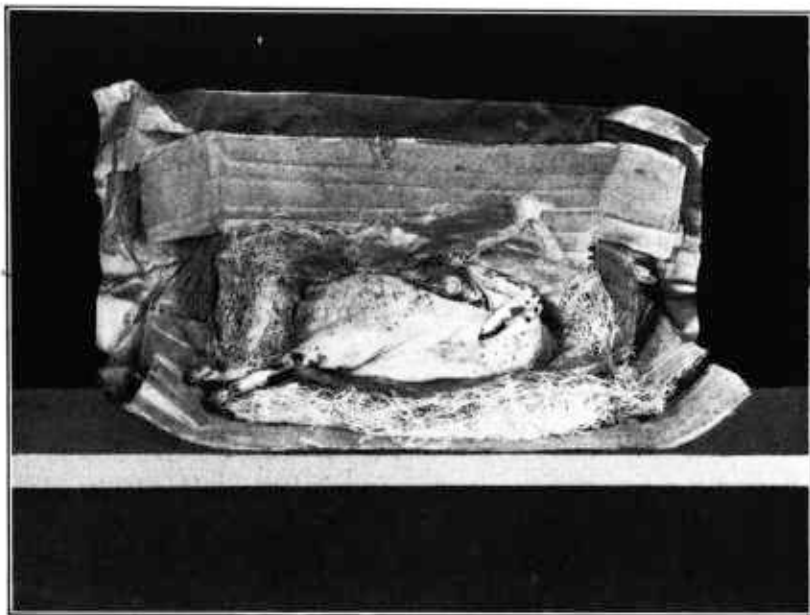


FIG. 11.—Dressed chicken received by parcel post during warm weather in May. As this fowl had been killed and packed properly, it was received in good condition, notwithstanding the fact that 48 hours had elapsed since the shipment was mailed. Parchment paper, excelsior, a piece of corrugated paperboard, and wrapping paper were used for a container

have not proved satisfactory for poultry shipments, nor have shoe boxes or boxes of similar lightweight paper board, as they are not stout enough.

#### PACKING DRESSED CHICKENS

Packing should not be done until just before the time to mail. All the packing material and the containers should be cooled and the packing should be done in a cool room with a temperature of 40° F., or below if possible. Head and feet should be wrapped and the head turned back and placed against the bony part of the chicken. Clean wrapping paper next to the carcass, surrounded by additional wrapping of newspaper, is useful to keep out the heat. Vacant corners in the container or package should be filled out with crumpled newspaper or excelsior. Every care should be taken that the chicken

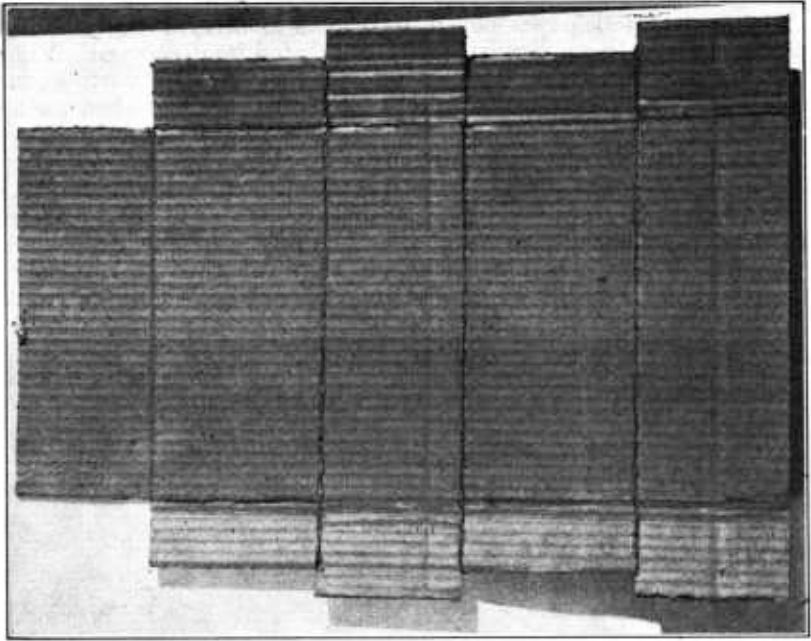


FIG. 12.—Piece of corrugated paperboard cut and scored to form a box 4 by 5 by 11 inches in size

may be in good shape and of good appearance on unpacking. The outer wrapping of every parcel should consist of good wrapping paper securely tied. If a splint basket is used, packing should proceed as already directed. At the end a pad of corrugated paper board, stout pasteboard, or thin, shaped wood should be placed on top of the contents and tied, as shown in Figure 14.

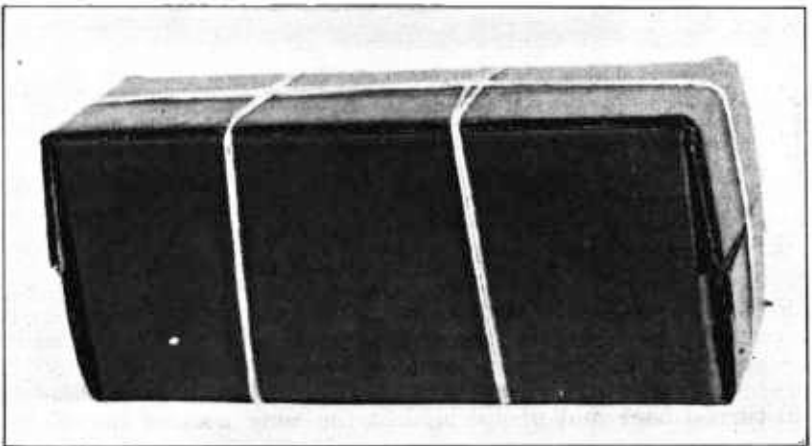


FIG. 13.—Piece of corrugated paperboard, as shown in Figure 12, folded to form a box and tied with twine

After it is packed, poultry should be kept in as cool a place as available and should be posted as near outgoing mail time as possible. It should be marked, "POULTRY, PERISHABLE," preferably in printed letters made by a rubber stamp or by hand. The customers should understand that poultry must be unpacked promptly on receipt and properly cared for.

#### EGGS

More parcels of eggs than of any other one product pass through the mails.

Many cities could be supplied with a considerable portion of their fresh-egg supply from within the first and second zones (and, when eggs are high priced, from the third zone) by parcel post. By such



FIG. 14.—Shipment of dressed poultry in splint basket. The cover of corrugated paperboard is easily tied down, as twine can be drawn between the splints whenever needed

direct contact the producer should secure somewhat better prices for his eggs than are realized by other methods of marketing, and the consumer should obtain a fresher quality at no increased cost, or, perhaps at a reduction in price. The producer who does not have satisfactory marketing facilities may find in the parcel post a means of solving his egg-marketing problems, especially in the case of the man whose flock is so small that he can not make case shipments in the regular 30-dozen egg case.

Only such eggs should be shipped as are produced by healthy fowls kept under proper sanitary conditions and supplied with sound, wholesome feed. If possible, only infertile eggs should be produced for market, as fertile eggs deteriorate rapidly and are the cause of much loss. A broody hen on the nest or exposure to a temperature

from other sources sufficient to start incubation causes all such eggs to spoil.

Eggs should be cared for carefully. The fowls should be kept under such conditions that the eggs will not be soiled in the nest by mud from the feet of the hens or otherwise; the eggs should be gathered at least once a day (twice a day is better), and should be stored in a well-ventilated place, which must be kept as cool as possible. Eggs intended for high-class trade should never be washed, as washing removes the natural mucilaginous protective coating of the egg and opens the pores of the shell. Eggs which are soiled should never be sent to a parcel-post customer.

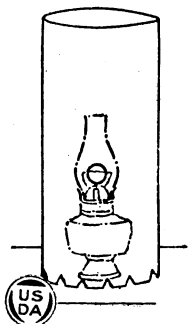


FIG. 15A.—A length of stovepipe and a lamp or electric light are easily converted into an egg candle. A hole  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter should be cut opposite the light

In spite of the greatest care it sometimes happens, under ordinary farm conditions, that an occasional bad egg appears among those sent to market. It is wise to candle every egg shipped; any defective ones should not be marketed. Candles is "the process of testing eggs by passing light through them, so as to reveal the condition of the contents." Homemade egg candler may be easily and cheaply made by using any light that is strong enough for the purpose. An electric light is best, but a good kerosene lamp, gas, or sunlight may be used. One of the simplest and most satisfactory homemade devices consists of a length of stovepipe with an electric light or kerosene lamp set inside. A round hole  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter should be cut directly on a level with the light. (See fig. 15A.) A tin can having a removable top and large enough to take an incandescent lamp, with a  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hole opposite the light filament, is another satisfactory homemade device where electric light is available. (See fig. 15B.) Such candling devices should be used in a darkened room. A simple device for use outdoors consists of a long heavy pasteboard tube like a mailing tube, large enough to admit the end of the egg. The eye is placed at the other end, and as the sunlight passes through the egg its condition is indicated.

Only first-class eggs can be marketed successfully by parcel post. The shipping of bad eggs causes dissatisfaction or even loss of customers, and in interstate shipments, if there are more than 5 per cent of bad eggs in a shipment, the Federal pure food law is violated. There is, however, no excuse for any bad eggs among those marketed.

#### EGG CONTAINERS

Experience has shown that parcels containing eggs are frequently mailed in containers not sufficiently strong and inadequately prepared and protected; these are a cause of complaint. The containers often can be secured more easily by the consumer, but the producer should make it a point to secure, through his local dealer or otherwise, such containers or car-

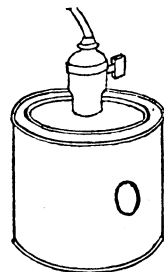


FIG. 15B.—An electric light and a tin can with removable top make a cheap and easily constructed egg candle. A hole  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter should be made opposite the light filament

riers as meet the requirements of the postal authorities and will carry the particular product in a satisfactory way. Containers can be obtained from most farm-supply houses and from mail-order stores.

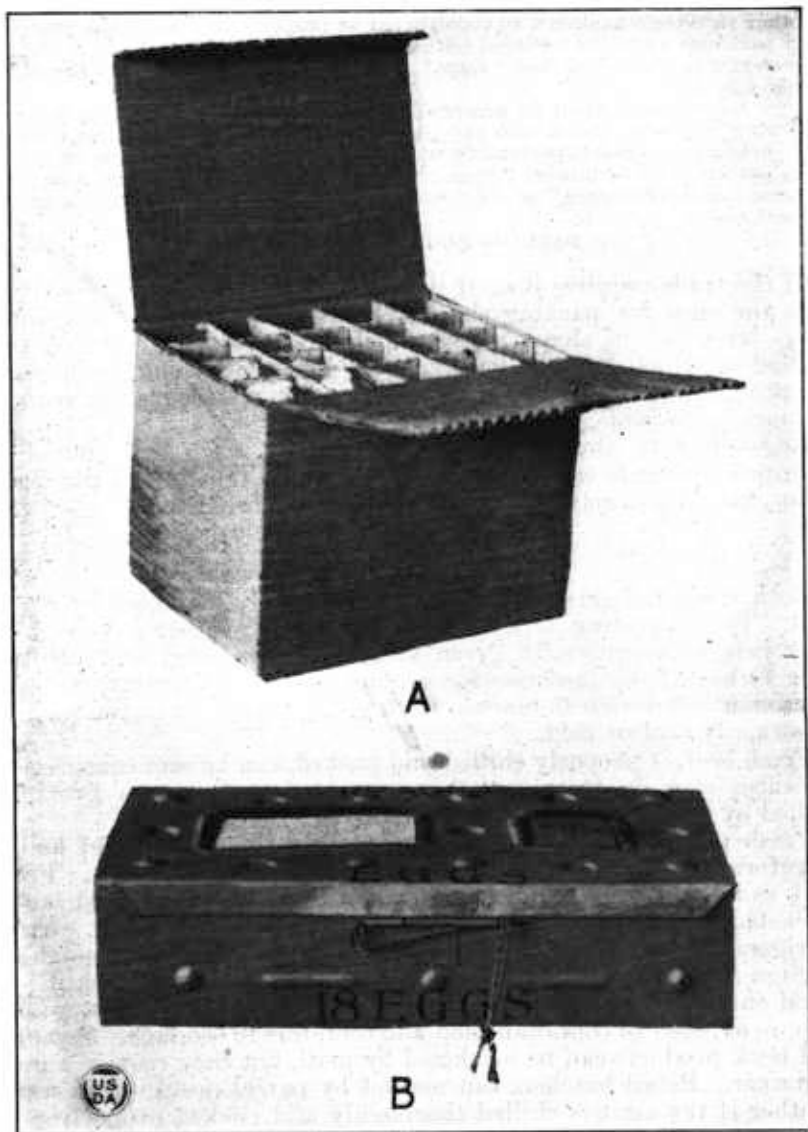


FIG. 16.—Shipment of eggs by parcel post requires strong, light containers. *A*, corrugated pasteboard container; *B*, metal container

The ideal container must be simple in construction, efficient in service, and cheap. Any part which is to be opened should be so marked or notched as to indicate the part to pull up or out.

Trials of many different styles and makes of containers or cartons for shipping eggs by parcel post have been made in experimental shipments. A number proved satisfactory in extended trials. (Fig.

16.) Any container which meets the postal requirements and which serves the purpose properly can be used.

The postal requirements for mailing eggs are as follows:

Eggs shall be accepted for mailing when packed in crates, boxes, baskets, or other suitable containers, so constructed as properly to protect the contents; such packages to be transported outside of mail bags. All parcels containing eggs should be plainly marked "Eggs." When necessary, they should be marked "This side up."

Eggs for hatching shall be accepted for mailing, when each egg is wrapped separately and surrounded with excelsior, wood wool, or other suitable material and packed in a basket, preferably with a handle, or other suitable container. Such parcels shall be labeled "Eggs for hatching," "Keep from heat and cold," "Please handle with care," or other suitable words, and shall be handled outside of mail sacks.

#### PACKING EGGS FOR SHIPMENT

If the trade requires it or if it can be done without any disadvantage the eggs for packing should be assorted as to size and color. Eggs irregular in shape, those which are unusually long or thin shelled or which have shells otherwise defective, should be kept by the producer for home use, so that breakage in transit may be reduced as much as possible.

Regardless of the style of the container, each egg should be wrapped with soft wrapping or newspaper, so that it will not shake about, and also to retard leakage if the egg be broken.

#### MEATS

Both fresh and cured meat can be successfully marketed by parcel post. The marketing of fresh meats in warm weather requires that very careful attention be given to chilling, packing, and mailing. Few farmers have facilities for cooling or chilling fresh meats, and so are not in position to market fresh meats except when the weather is normally cool or cold.

Fresh beef, if properly chilled and packed, can be sent considerable distances even in warm weather, provided it be again promptly chilled by the customer when it is received.

Fresh pork becomes tainted more readily than fresh beef and is therefore more difficult to ship satisfactorily by parcel post. Fresh pork sausage is usually much in demand by city dwellers and can be marketed by parcel post during several months of the year, even if refrigerating facilities are not available. If stuffed sausage or sausage inclosed in casings is dried for a few days or a week it will stand shipping much better. Sausage meat ground but not stuffed is more exposed to contamination and therefore to spoilage. Scrapple and pork products can be marketed by mail, but they require a good container. Retail butchers can market by parcel post even in warm weather if the meat is chilled thoroughly and packed properly with plenty of packing and wrapping paper to keep out the heat, provided the meat can be delivered to the customer within a few hours after mailing.

The opportunities for marketing cured meats are much greater than for marketing fresh meats, as cured meats can be sent through the mails during the entire year. Cured hams, shoulders, bacon, and smoked sausage can be sent by mail at a relatively low cost per pound, as they do not require an expensive shipping container; and such meats are in demand by consumers at all seasons. Figure 17 shows a

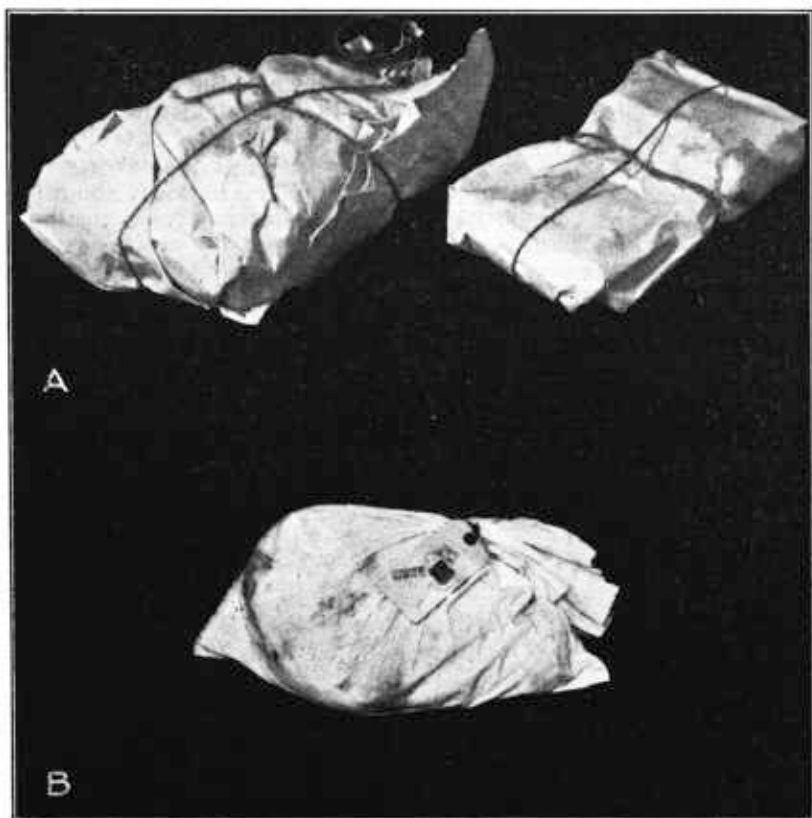


FIG. 17.—A, ham and side of bacon wrapped in paper and shipped in corrugated paperboard container; B, ham shipped in a strong bag

wrapped ham and a wrapped side of bacon and a ham in a bag that were shipped by parcel post. Figure 18 shows the appearance of the ham and the side of bacon when unwrapped.

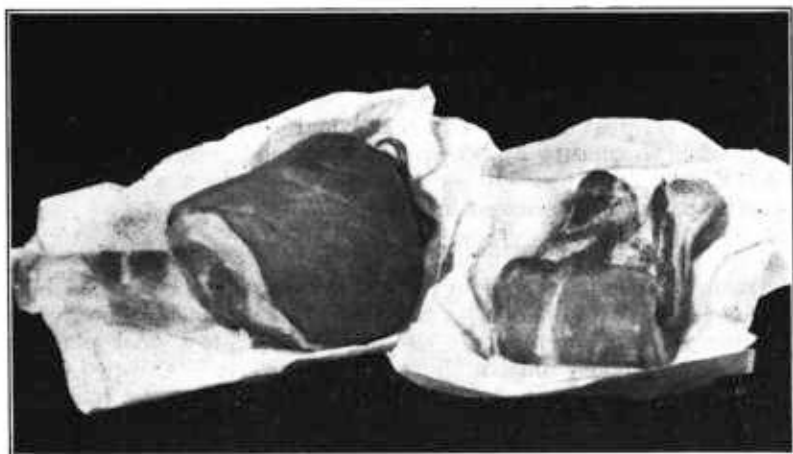


FIG. 18.—Ham and side of bacon shown in Figure 17, unwrapped

## CURING MEATS

Particular care should be taken by farmers who cure meats for direct sale. Slaughtering should be done when the weather is cool. The carcass should be chilled thoroughly so that all of the animal heat is removed before the meat is cut up to be cured. A temperature of from 34° to 40° F. is desirable. It is better if the carcass is not allowed to freeze during the cooling process. The meat should not be placed where there are any disagreeable odors, as fresh meats take up odors readily. Cleanliness is very important for sanitary reasons and because meat becomes tainted very easily.

The curing of meat should begin while the meat is still fresh. It should be cut into uniform pieces and all ragged edges should be trimmed.<sup>4</sup> Whatever method of curing is used, care should be taken to keep the meat from taking up too much salt. After meats are cured and smoked they should be chilled to air temperature and

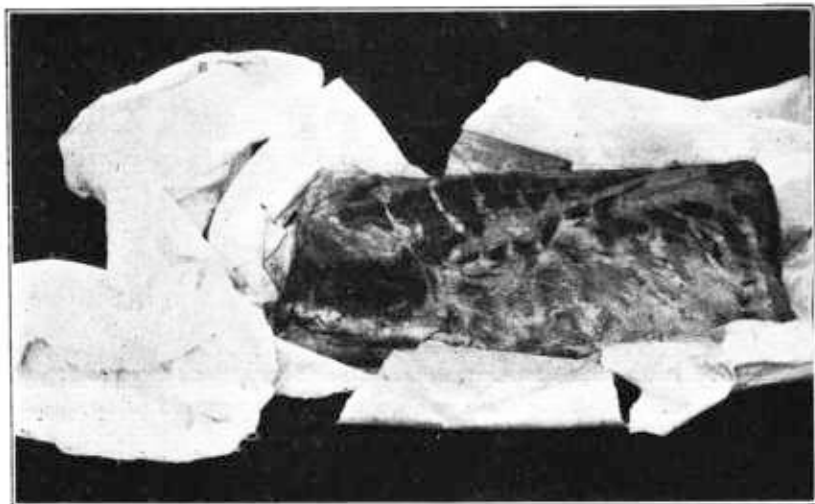


FIG. 19.—Side of bacon trimmed and cured properly. This meat was shipped, unrolled, by parcel post

wrapped in paper or cloth, to exclude dirt and flies, and should be stored in a dark room where there is ventilation to keep them in good condition until they are marketed. Success in marketing cured meats by parcel post depends to a large degree upon the proper curing of meat of high quality and keeping it in good condition until marketed. Figure 19 shows a piece of well-cured bacon which had been shipped flat and was received in good condition.

## CHILLING FRESH MEATS

If fresh meat is marketed by parcel post, it must be cooled before it is packed. It should not be shipped until at least 36 hours after the animal is slaughtered. It should be kept in a cool place and should not be packed until a short time before it is shipped. As in the case of poultry, care should be taken to prevent the meat from cooling too rapidly. The shipping containers and wrapping paper

<sup>4</sup> ASHBROOK, F. G., ANTHONY, G. A., and LUND, F. P. PORK ON THE FARM. KILLING, CURING, AND CANNING. U. S. Dept. Agr. Farmers' Bull. 1186, 44 p., illus. 1921.

should be kept in a cool place until the meat is packed, as they will help in keeping the meat cool while it is in transit.

Fresh meat received by parcel post should be unpacked and put in a cool place immediately upon arrival, or it will soon become tainted. Many city dwellers who have received fresh meat by parcel post and left it in a warm place for several hours thought that the meat was tainted because it was shipped by parcel post, but in many cases the damage to the meat occurred after it was received.

#### PACKING MEATS FOR PARCEL-POST SHIPMENT

In general, the instructions that have been given for packing poultry for shipment may be followed in packing fresh meats for shipment. Cured meats need only to be thoroughly wrapped to

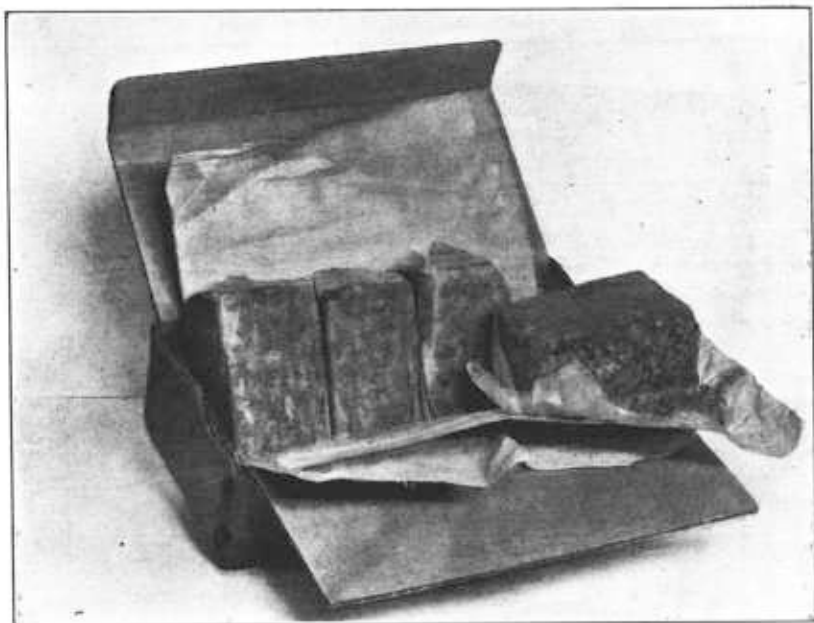


FIG. 20.—Four pounds of bulk sausage shipped by parcel post in corrugated paper-board container; each pound of sausage wrapped in parchment paper

exclude dirt, flies, and other insects. Usually it is desirable to use a container. The meat should, of course, be wrapped in clean oil paper or waxed or parchment paper before it is tied up or packed for mailing.

Fresh meats require more careful packing for mailing than cured meats unless the weather is relatively cool and the time in shipment short. Fresh meats should be packed with sufficient packing material to keep out the heat. The meat, the packing and wrapping material, and the container should all be cold when the meat is packed for mailing. Corrugated paper board supplies satisfactory insulating material, keeping the cold in and the heat out. For sausage and similar meat products a container is desirable to keep it in good shape so that when delivered it will appear attractive. If bulk sausage is crushed in transit, the paper in which it is wrapped is usually difficult to remove from the sausage. Stuffed sausage can be sent without

a container, but better results are obtained if containers are used. Figures 20 and 21 show actual shipments of sausage.

#### CERTIFICATES REQUIRED FOR INTERSTATE SHIPMENT

It is not necessary for a farmer to have Government inspection of meat from animals slaughtered by him on his farm. No certificate is necessary when shipping such meat to points in the same State unless in the course of shipment the article is taken through another State.

The regulations governing the meat inspection of the United States Department of Agriculture apply to any meat or meat product derived from the slaughter of cattle, sheep, swine, or goats to be shipped in interstate or foreign trade. Any farmer or person shipping meat slaughtered by a farmer on the farm, by parcel post, if it

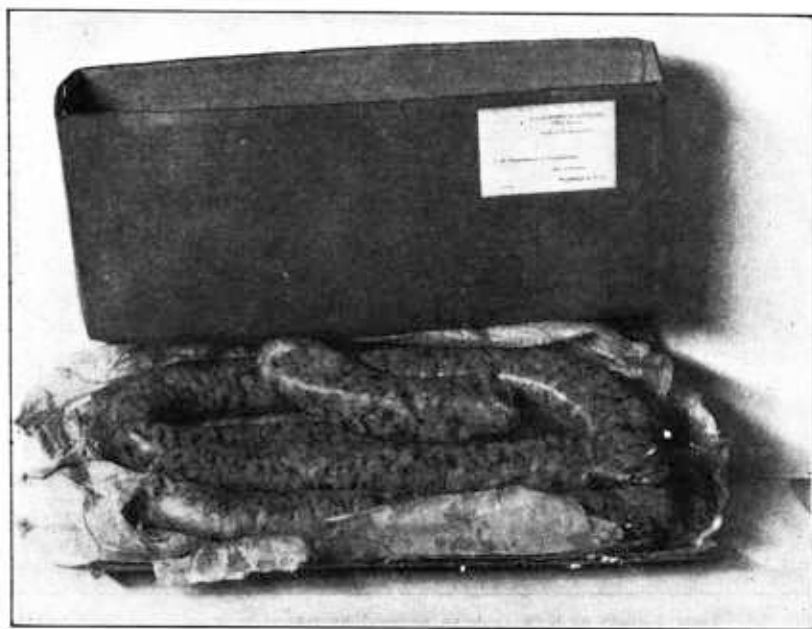


FIG. 21.—Parcel-post shipment of 5 pounds of sausage stuffed in casings. Container open, showing sausage, parchment paper, and container

goes to or through any other State, must fill out and file with the postmaster two copies of the following form:

Date....., 192...

Name of carrier.....  
 Shipper.....  
 Point of shipment.....  
 Consignee.....  
 Destination.....

I hereby certify that the following-described uninspected meat or meat food products are from animals slaughtered by a farmer on the farm and are offered for transportation in interstate or foreign commerce as exempted from inspection according to the act of Congress of June 30, 1906, and that at this date they are sound, healthful, wholesome, and fit for human food, and contain no preservative or coloring matter or other substance prohibited by the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture governing meat inspection.

Kind of product	Amount and weight
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
(Signature of shipper)	
(Address of shipper)	

Any retail butcher or retail dealer who wishes to ship meat by parcel post, if it goes to or through any other State, must first have a certificate, to be obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture, exempting his business from inspection. For each shipment he must fill out and file with the postmaster two copies of the following form:

Date \_\_\_\_\_, 192\_\_.

Name of carrier \_\_\_\_\_

Shipper \_\_\_\_\_

Point of shipment \_\_\_\_\_

Consignee \_\_\_\_\_

Destination \_\_\_\_\_

Number of exemption certificate \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I am a retail butcher or a retail dealer in meat or meat food products; that the following-described meat or meat food products are offered for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce under a certificate of exemption issued to me by the United States Department of Agriculture, and that at this date they are sound, healthful, wholesome, and fit for human food, and contain no preservative or coloring matter or other substance prohibited by the regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture governing meat inspection.

Kind of product	Amount and weight
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
(Signature of shipper)	
(Address of shipper)	

Each certificate of this kind shall show the exemption certificate number of the shipper.

Anyone who wishes to make interstate shipments of meats that have been Government inspected must file a copy of the following certificate, properly filled out, with the postmaster: *Provided* the meat bears the marks of Government inspection:

Date \_\_\_\_\_, 192\_\_.

Name of carrier \_\_\_\_\_

Shipper \_\_\_\_\_

Point of shipment \_\_\_\_\_

Consignee \_\_\_\_\_

Destination \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that the following-described meat or meat-food products, which are offered for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce, have been United States inspected and passed by the Department of Agriculture, are so marked, and at this date are sound, healthful, wholesome, and fit for human food.

Kind of product	Amount and weight
-----	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
(Signature of shipper)	
(Address of shipper)	

The signature of the person making the shipment or the person who mails it must be written in full on the certificates filed with the postmaster.

These certificate requirements are issued by the Bureau of Animal Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, and that bureau permits certificates to be printed, typewritten, made with a rubber stamp, or in handwriting, but specifies that they should be on paper 5½ by 8 inches in size so as to be convenient to file.

The foregoing requirements in regard to certificates to be filled out and filed in connection with parcel-post shipments of meats apply also to shipments of meats made by any other means of public-carrier transportation.

#### MARKING AND MAILING PARCELS OF MEAT

Parcel-post shipments of meat should be marked "perishable," and the words "fresh meat" should be used. Fresh meats should be mailed as near time for dispatching mail as possible, preferably in the evening. If parcels are mailed on rural routes, the carrier should be asked to give them the best care possible until he delivers them at the post office. Exposure to the midday heat for several hours often causes trouble. Sometimes lack of care of perishable parcels mailed on rural routes before they reach the post office causes more damage than the entire further mail service through which they go. The post-office requirements for mailing fresh meat are the same as those for dressed poultry.

#### SHRINKAGE IN SHIPPING MEATS BY PARCEL POST

There is no appreciable shrinkage or loss in weight in shipping cured meats by parcel post, but fresh meats, if sent some distance, rarely weigh as much when received as when shipped. Although the loss in weight usually is small, it affects the price per pound. Every ounce of loss in weight increases the price per pound to the consumer and decreases the margin between country and city prices. A loss in weight of an ounce on a 3 or 4 pound shipment makes a very small difference in the price per pound, but a loss of an ounce on a pound would be noticeable both in weight and price.

The loss in weight of meat in parcel-post shipments varies greatly with the kind of meat, method of packing, length of time in transit, temperature, and other factors. In experimental shipments of fresh meat received by the Department of Agriculture the shrinkage varied from practically none to as high as an ounce per pound. This maximum shrinkage occurred in only one of the shipments. The average loss in weight was less than one-fourth ounce per pound, or approximately 1½ per cent.

Unless consumers know that loss in weight occurs in meat shipped by parcel post, dissatisfaction often results when they receive meat that weighs less than the weight stated by the producer. The shipper should try to avoid dissatisfaction by taking care to see that the meat, when chilled ready for shipment, weighs as much as the weight reported to the customer.

#### BUTTER

Butter is highly perishable unless it is handled under proper conditions; yet the fact that many consumers obtain their supplies direct

from producers by parcel post, proved by the quantity passing through many post offices, indicates that parcel-post marketing of butter is feasible. It is usually an economical method, as the cost of market distribution through the regular wholesale and retail channels of trade is relatively high in comparison with the cost of shipments by parcel post from the first and second and sometimes more distant zones.

Well-made butter, thoroughly chilled before shipping, when packed in a suitable container, can be marketed satisfactorily by parcel post when extreme high temperatures are not encountered. Under ordinary conditions, where the butter does not melt and a firm or semi-firm condition is maintained, the shipping of butter by parcel post generally may be successful. Even though proper safeguards are taken, shipments made during extremely hot weather are likely to arrive in an oily and unsatisfactory condition.

#### QUALITY AND CONDITION OF BUTTER

Every possible precaution should be taken before shipment. Particularly is this true of farm-made butter, because conditions affecting its quality and condition usually can not be controlled as easily on farms as in creameries.

It is necessary to maintain proper conditions in the care of the milk and cream and the making of butter if a marketable product is to be produced. Too much importance can not be given to the maintaining of cleanly conditions in the stable and in other places where the milk, cream, or butter are produced or kept, for they absorb odors and spoil very quickly. It is important, too, that these products be kept in a cool place. High temperatures should always be avoided, as heated cream or butter produces a soft, oily, undesirable condition in the finished product. In manufacturing butter on the farm or in a factory the buttermilk must be removed and washed out and the proper amount of salt must be incorporated evenly.

#### PREPARATION OF BUTTER FOR PARCEL-POST SHIPPING

Frequently parcel-post shipments of farm butter are unsatisfactory to customers because proper methods were not used in making it, and the quality and condition of the butter were injured before it was shipped. For the satisfaction of customers it is important that a uniform quality of butter be produced. Some customers may prefer "sweet" butter, which is butter made without salt.

The methods used in preparing butter for parcel-post shipping depend largely upon the local conditions and the style of package used. To insure delivery in the best possible condition the butter after being packed or printed and placed in cartons should be chilled or hardened thoroughly before it is shipped.

One of the most satisfactory ways of preparing butter for shipment is to form regular 1-pound prints. The standard print measures  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{5}{8}$  inches. A hand butter printer or mold, such as can be purchased at almost any store that handles farmers' supplies, should be used in forming the prints.

Each pound print should be neatly wrapped in regular butter parchment or paper. A second thickness of such paper has been found to add materially to the carrying possibility of the butter. Waxed paper may be used for the second wrapping. As a further

protection to the print, it should be placed in heavy manila paraffined cartons, which may be obtained from companies manufacturing folding paper boxes or from dairy-supply houses.

#### SHIPPING CONTAINERS FOR BUTTER

Corrugated fiber-board shipping containers of various sizes may be obtained for shipping 1-pound prints of butter. (See fig. 22.)

These containers partially insulate the butter and furnish much protection against heat. Further protection may be obtained by wrapping the container in stout wrapping paper and tying it securely. Metal containers are used for combination shipments of butter and eggs.

Butter shipped in an improvised container should be wrapped in parchment paper and several thicknesses of newspaper and then securely tied with string. The package should then be inclosed in the piece of corrugated paper board with the projections of the paper board so folded as to form a container. The container should then be tied, wrapped in heavy wrapping paper, and again tied securely.

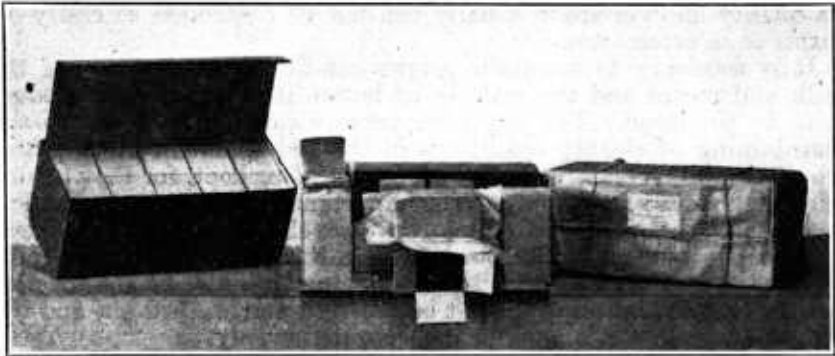


FIG. 22.—Three stages of a parcel-post package of butter: At right, wrapped; left, opened; center, showing print of butter

As butter is highly perishable, parcels containing butter should be marked "Butter—keep from heat," or with similar words.

For the improvised carton shown in Figure 23 the paper board was so cut that it was  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and 25 inches long, with projections in the middle of the length which were  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and extended  $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches on each side. This provided a carton  $4\frac{1}{2}$  by 6 by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches, when folded, as shown in the illustration.

If butter that is being prepared for shipment in this way is thoroughly chilled before being mailed, it should carry safely even in warm weather if it is in transit not over 24 to 36 hours.

#### CHEESE

Most varieties of cheese can be shipped any distance by parcel post without difficulty.

The two important varieties of cheese produced on farms are cottage cheese and American (full cream or whole milk) cheese. Cottage cheese is soft and perishable. When made rather dry and packed in moisture-proof packages, it may be shipped to points where delivery can be made within 24 to 36 hours. As the firmer varieties of

cheese are ripened or cured and paraffined before they are marketed, they can be more successfully shipped by parcel post than can cottage cheese.

General care should be exercised in the packaging of cheese for shipment by parcel post. The surface of the cheese should be clean and, if necessary, paraffined. As a protection to the cheese, it should be wrapped in several layers of paper, preferably with a waxed paper next to the cheese. Corrugated or other fiber-board containers or wooden boxes may be used as shipping containers. Some cheese producers manufacture a small size, weighing from 2 to 5 pounds, suited for parcel-post shipment.

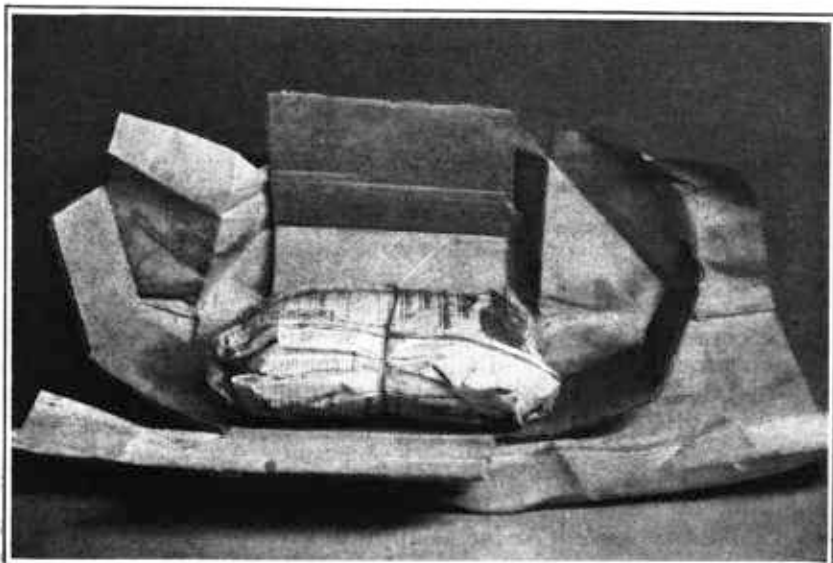


FIG. 23.—Actual parcel-post shipment of 3 pounds of butter wrapped in parchment paper, several thicknesses of newspaper, corrugated paper-board carton, and finally an outside wrapper of heavy wrapping paper

## CREAM AND MILK

### CREAM

At the request of the Post Office Department, the Bureau of Dairy Industry, United States Department of Agriculture, issued the following instructions to parcel-post cream shippers:

Unless cream is properly produced and handled it is apt to spoil en route. This is due to the action of yeasts and bacteria that have gotten into the cream. It may damage other mail and become a nuisance and be a loss to the shipper. This may be prevented if the producer will observe only a few simple precautions. Cream which will keep may be produced by following the suggestions given here:

**Clean, healthy cows and milkers.**

Brush visible dirt off flanks and udders before starting to milk.

Wipe udders and flanks with clean damp cloth.

Keep stables clean and see that cows have plenty of fresh air.

Wash hands before milking.

Milk with dry hands.

Use clean, sanitary, sterilized utensils.

Use only smooth tin utensils.

Wash utensils immediately after using.

Boil strainer cloth every time it is used.

After washing scald with boiling water or steam everything with which the milk or cream comes in contact.

Be sure the shipping can is washed clean and thoroughly sterilized with steam or boiling water.

Store the utensils in sunlight when possible, inverted and out of dust.

Use a centrifugal cream separator because—

Cream may be shipped fresher.

More butterfat is secured.

Richer cream is obtained; therefore, less weight to ship.

Richer cream will keep better.

Pan setting is undesirable, because it is favorable to bacterial growth.

Keep separator clean.

Take apart, wash, and scald every time it is used.

Take special care of cream.

Cool cream immediately after separation.

Never mix warm and cold cream.

Make shipments as frequently as possible.

Hold at low temperature. In cold weather protect from freezing.

Do not leave at roadside longer than necessary.

Provide protection from sun and dust while awaiting collection.

KEEP CREAM CLEAN, COVERED, COLD

The container used is the regulation or usual type of can for handling cream. The name and address of the owner of the can should be put on the can either with paint or with metal letters soldered on.

#### MILK

Should a producer be justified from the economic viewpoint in shipping milk by parcel post, the instructions given for the care of cream should be used in so far as applicable.

#### MUSHROOMS

As mushrooms are an article of comparative high value per pound, they can readily be shipped by parcel post. Any suitable container can be used, and they should be marked or labeled, as suggested for other commodities, to prevent crushing. The producer of mushrooms need not necessarily be near his market, as they will stand considerable transportation by parcel post.

#### NUTS AND NUT MEATS

The nuts most commonly grown in the United States under cultivation are English (Persian) walnuts, almonds, and pecans. The native nuts, like black walnuts, butternuts, or white walnuts, hickory nuts, and shellbarks, and the wild-growing pecans, may also be included in parcel-post shipments, as they are not perishable when sent through the mails. They can be shipped in any suitable container, like a bag of stout muslin or a corrugated paper board or other secure box. The nuts should be properly ripened and should be in good marketable condition. Those with worms or defects from other causes should be sorted out.

Nut meats are easily marketed by parcel post direct to the consumer, and especially for the holiday season may constitute a source of revenue to the farm boys and girls. The nuts should be gathered at the proper time and should be properly cured, so that the cracking out of the meats may be accomplished in time for the holiday trade. In cracking the nuts care should be taken to get out as many halves as possible. The small particles or crumbs should be kept for home use, although there may be housewives who would be willing to buy small pieces of nut meats at an appropriate price for use in cakes, taffy, candies, and salads. Care must be exercised to keep out the small pieces of nut shells. A good container of corrugated board or any suitable material can be used. Putting the nut meats into a bag of light material will prevent leaking in case the container should become damaged. They should be labeled on the outside of the parcel "Nut meats," with the words "Do not crush" added.

#### MAPLE SUGAR, SIRUPS, AND HONEY

Maple sugar can readily be marketed by parcel post, preferably in a box of proper size suitable for the purpose. It can be shipped any distance that the cost of postage justifies.

Maple sirup, cane sirup, sorgo sirup, etc., can be shipped by parcel post when put into a tin container with secure screw cap, as shown in Figure 24, and the tin container inclosed in a corrugated paper-board box. Friction-topped pails should not be used unless inclosed in a wooden crate or box; if inclosed in a corrugated paper-board box, there is danger that the top of the pail may be accidentally sprung enough to cause leakage.

Extracted honey can be shipped in the same way as sirups. Comb honey should be placed in a friction-top pail and then securely crated.

#### PLANTS AND CUT FLOWERS

Practically all kinds of vegetable and flowering plants and cut flowers can be shipped by parcel post if proper care is given in preparing them for shipment by supplying appropriate ventilation and moisture. Sphagnum moss or some similar packing material which retains moisture may be used in packing plants for shipment. It should be made thoroughly damp but not wet enough to cause leakage or dripping of water. The wrapping next to the plants and damp packing material should be of parchment, butcher's paper, or other paper relatively impervious to water. A producer who wishes to ship flowers by parcel post should make a special study of how florists pack flowers for shipment, as improper packing will destroy the value of the cut flowers. Most cut-flower boxes are provided with lids which allow practically no ventilation. The individual grower and shipper of flowers will need to work out his packing problems as his market may require.

#### OTHER ITEMS

There are many other items which, if given special attention, could doubtless be marketed direct. Seasoning herbs like sage, dill, and sweet marjoram, wild or natural "teas" like peppermint, penny-

royal, wood's dittany, and bergamot, and such greens as cress and mustard lend themselves readily to parcel-post marketing. The person who has the knack for such marketing will think of other com-



FIG. 24.—Tin containers and corrugated paper-board jackets or outer containers for sending liquid sweets through the mails. Such containers have proved satisfactory

modities for which a market is not readily available. In this way the time spent in the actual work of marketing may be largely at the farmer's convenience, and it may afford employment for spare time, especially in the winter or at other occasional slack seasons.

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